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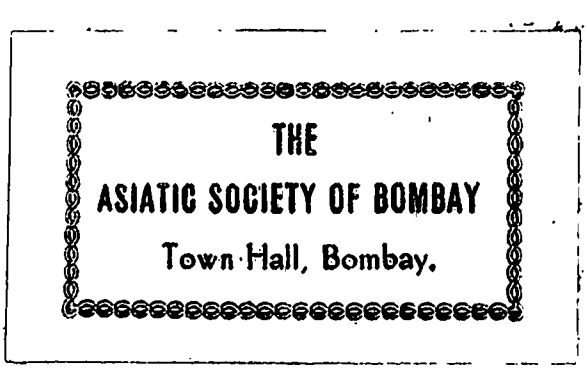

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THE CITY of WASHINGTON in 1800.

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THE LIFE

OF

GEORGE WASHINGTON,

COMMANDER IN CHIEF

OF THE

AMERICAN FORCES

DURING THE WAR WHICH ESTABLISHED THE INDEPENDENCE OF HIS COUNTRY,

AND FIRST PRESIDENT

OF

THE UNITED STATES.

36629

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COMPILED UNDER THE INSPECTION OF

THE HON. BUSHROD WASHINGTON,

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TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

AN INTRODUCTION,

CONTAINING A COMPENDIOUS VIEW OF THE COLONIES PLANTED BY THE ENGLISH ON THE CONTINENT OF NORTH AMERICA.

BY JOHN MARSHALL,

CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE UNITED STATES, &c. &c.

VOL. III.

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THE

LIFE

OF

GENERAL WASHINGTON.

CHAPTER I.

Arnold defeated on the Lakes—General Carleton appears before Ticonderoga—Retires into Winter Quarters in Canada—Indian Affairs—Treatment of Prisoners—Maritime Exertions of America—Paper Money—General Conduct to the disaffected—Observations on Militia, and the Defects in the Structure of the American Army.

ALTHOUGH the Americans had been driven out of Canada, and the hope of annexing that province to the union was abandoned for the present, the northern department was still of the utmost importance, and the transactions of that quarter were, in a highdegree, interesting to the whole. The war had indeed changed its object, and its character. Instead of conquest, the views of the United States were now limited to the defence of their own territory; and so great was the force directed against them, as to render their ability to

repel invasion extremely doubtful: but as the theatre of action approached nearer home, the scenes assumed a deeper interest. The possession of lakes Champlain and George by the enemy, which might lead to the acquisition of Albany, and all the upper parts of the Hudson, thereby opening a free communication between the British northern army and that in New York, and enabling them to co-operate with each other, while it would, in a great measure, sever and disconnect the eastern from the middle and southern states, was an event as much to be deprecated on the one side, as it was to be wished on the other. Its importance would be much increased by the political temper which continued to be very prevalent in the state of New York. The royalists were still powerful in the middle and upper country, as well as on the sea coast; and required only the protection of a British army to shew themselves in great force.

Congress was well aware of the great importance of securing this frontier, and made powerful exertions to effect it: but the same mistaken policy, which had so enfeebled the army in the middle department, had also shed its baneful influence on that of the north.

On opening the campaign of 1776, instead of reinforcing, it was necessary to re-create the army; and we have already seen how much these raw troops were

were weakened by the enemy, by the small-pox, and by other diseases. Under the pressure of these calamities, it had been deemed necessary to strengthen them by such large draughts from the army designed to act under General Washington, as to compel him to rely so much upon militia, that he was exposed to the most serious hazards.

The command of this department had been entrusted to General Schuyler, a gentleman of considerable talents, who possessed great and deserved influence in the country. General Gates was named to the command of the army of Canada, and on his reaching Ticonderoga, claimed the command of the army, though it was no longer in Canada, but in the department of General Schuyler, a senior officer, who had rendered very eminent services * in that station, and who, if placed under General Gates, must have felt it impossible to continue in the army. On the repre-

* The duties of General Schuyler had been laborious, intricate, and complicated; and he had discharged them with fidelity and talents. On him, almost exclusively, had devolved the difficult task of conducting the affairs of America with the Six Nations; and, while employed in furnishing the army of Canada with provisions and ammunition, in forwarding the reinforcements designed for its aid, and in preparing the means for retaining the command of the lakes; it was also necessary to bestow a considerable share of attention on the Tories of that country, who were numerous, and much disposed to aid the enemy.

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sentation, however, of this circumstance to Congress, it was declared not to be their intention to place Gates over Schuyler, and it was recommended to those officers to endeavour to co-operate harmoniously. It was no small evidence of the zeal of the senior officer for the public service, that this was practicable.

With all the reinforcements which had been received, considerable fears were entertained of their ability to maintain their ground against the enemy. The British army commanded by General Carleton, in great force, and flushed with victory, was about Montreal and St. John's. Fortunately the command of the lakes was essential to their further progress, and they did not possess a single vessel on those waters.

It was deemed of too much importance to the success of the war, to relinquish the enterprise on account of obstacles not absolutely insurmountable, that the army should penetrate to Albany by this route, and thereby open a free communication from thence, through the lakes, with Canada. It was therefore determined to construct a fleet superior to that of the Americans, and to convey it in a condition for service into lake Champlain. This arduous work was immediately commenced.

General Schuyler on his part was not unemployed. He used all the means in his power so to strengthen his little fleet as to maintain a superi-

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ority over the enemy on the lakes. In this effort, the commander in chief, sensible of the advantages to be derived from maintaining a superiority on those waters, cordially co-operated; and his letters manifest the most anxious solicitude on this interesting subject. But it was found impracticable to obtain, in sufficient quantities to equal the wishes of the general, either artillery, the necessary materials for ship-building, or workmen to construct the vessels. The carpenters were generally employed in the sea-port towns, and could not easily be prevailed on to transfer themselves to the lakes. The heavy materials for a fleet were obtained with difficulty, and sparingly; in addition to which, they were to be transported with immense labour and expence, by land, a very great distance.

In consequence of these embarrassments, the fleet equipped by the Americans amounted only to fifteen vessels, consisting of two schooners, one sloop, one cutter, three gallies, and eight gondolas. The largest schooner mounted only twelve guns, carrying six and four pound balls.

It was deemed of much importance that this fleet should be commanded by a person of invincible resolution, and the commander in chief expressed a strong solicitude, that Arnold should be appointed to this dangerous service. That officer had acquired, and deserved, much reputation in the ex-

pedition against Quebec. Every thing which courage could perform was now again expected from him; nor were these expectations disappointed by the event.

The small-pox, which had made such havoc in the northern army while in Canada, still continuing its ravages, and infecting the reinforcements as they arrived, it was deemed necessary to stop those who were on their march at Skeensborough. The mortality produced by this, and other diseases, was such, that the northern army did not exhibit the force which Congress had designed to give it; and, in a council of general officers, it was determined to evacuate Crown Point, and concentrate their forces about Ticonderoga.

This measure, which the feeble condition of the army, most probably, rendered adviseable, was considered as surrendering lake Champlain to the enemy, and opening to them the whole country of New England. The field officers unanimously remonstrated against it; and General Washington himself expressed great surprise at it. Nothing but necessity, he conceived, could justify the abandonment of so important a place; but as he, very properly, thought himself at too great distance to give any positive orders on the subject, the measure was persisted in. Congress were disposed to be regulated in their plans, rather by their wishes, than by the means placed in the hands

hands of their military commanders for the execution of them; and were so far from expecting this retrograde movement, that their views were extended to the lakes Ontario and Erie, and they were then contemplating a plan for taking possession of those waters, and securing them by a naval force. These speculations were soon interrupted by demonstrating to them the unwelcome truth, that instead of acquiring the command of other lakes, they were unable to retain those already in their possession.

With almost incredible exertions, the British general constructed a powerful fleet, the materials for which he transported a considerable distance over land.* He afterwards dragged up the rapids of St. Theresc and St. John's thirty long boats, a number of flat boats of considerable burden, a gondola, weighing thirty tons, with above four hundred batteaux. This immense work was completed in little more than three months, and, as if by magic, General Arnold saw on the lakes, the beginning of October, a fleet, consisting of the ship Inflexible, carrying eighteen twelve pounders; one schooner mounting fourteen, and another twelve six pounders; a flat bottomed radeau carrying six twenty-four, and six twelve pounders besides howitzers; and a gondola carrying seven

* Ann. Reg.

nine pounders. Twenty smaller vessels, under the denomination of gun boats, carried brass field pieces from nine to twenty-four pounders, or were armed with howitzers. Some long boats were furnished in the same manner, and about an equal number of large boats acted as tenders.* This formidable fleet, navigated by seven hundred prime seamen, on board of which was General Carleton himself, was conducted by Captain Pringle, and the guns were served by experienced artillery men. It proceeded immediately in quest of Arnold, who was soon found very advantageously posted, and forming a strong line to defend

* Intelligence was given to General Washington from Canada of these immense preparations; but he flattered himself that the account was exaggerated. By the same authority he was also informed, that the army to invade the United States, by the way of the lakes, which was to be commanded by General Carleton, consisted of about eight thousand British and German troops, and a regiment of artillery under General Philips, with the finest train ever sent over from England, and a large body of Canadians. It was also a part of the plan, that Sir John Johnson was to go round by Oswego with eight hundred Indians, Maclean's regiment, and some volunteers, to enter the country by the way of Fort George, and cut off the communication between Albany and Ticonderoga. This intelligence was communicated to the officers commanding on the lakes, and they were urged to make correspondent exertions on their part: but the means of doing so were not in their possession.

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the passage between the island of Valicour and the western main.

Notwithstanding the vast disparity of force, a warm action ensued. An unfavourable wind kept the Inflexible, and some others of the largest vessels of the hostile fleet, at too great a distance to render any service. This fortunate circumstance enabled Arnold to keep up the engagement for several hours. Towards night, the English commander thought it advisable to discontinue the action for the present; and the whole fleet was anchored in a line as near that of the Americans as it could be brought, for the purpose of preventing their escape. In this engagement the best schooner belonging to the American flotilla was burnt, and a gondola carrying three or four guns was sunk.

The best eulogium which can be bestowed on the conduct of the Americans on this affair is, that notwithstanding their inferiority of force, they were not defeated, though the enemy spoke with great praise of the conduct of their own officers and men.

Finding it impossible to renew the action next day, Arnold made his escape in the night, in the hope of reaching Ticonderoga, and being sheltered under the guns of the fort. The wind being favourable, he was the next morning entirely out of sight. An immediate pursuit, however, was made, and, about noon, he was overtaken, and brought

brought to action, a few leagues short of Crown Point.

He kept up a very warm engagement for about two hours, in the course of which those vessels which were most ahead pushed on with the utmost speed, and, passing Crown Point, escaped to Ticonderoga. Two gallies and five gondolas which remained, made a deperate resistance. One of them, the Washington, having on board the second in command, at length struck, and was taken. Unable longer to maintain the action, and determined not to fall into the hands of the enemy, Arnold ran the remaining vessels on shore, in such a manner as to land their crews in safety; after which he blew them up, and saved his men, in spite of the efforts to prevent both.

This defeat did not dispirit the Americans, nor diminish the reputation of Arnold. The gallant resistance he had made with such inferiority of force; his having, when defeated, saved his men, and prevented his vessels from falling into the hands of the enemy, were consoling circumstances, which were considered as deducting something from the loss of the lakes.

A small detachment which had been stationed at Crown Point as an outpost, immediately on the approach of the enemy set fire to the houses, evacuated the place, and retired to Ticonderoga, which it was determined to defend to the last extremity.

General

General Carleton took possession of Crown Point, and advanced a part of his fleet into lake George, within view of Ticonderoga. His army also approached that place, as if designed to lay siege to it.

The combined force of Schuyler and Gates amounted to between eight and nine thousand men. Care had been taken to lay in a sufficient stock of provisions, and to strengthen the works very considerably. Application was made to General Washington for directions for calling in a reinforcement of militia. That officer had smarted so severely for depending on essential aid from this source, that his opinion was against calling them to the assistance of the garrison, unless it should be absolutely insufficient for the defence of the works. He conceived that, if he were not misinformed respecting the strength of the northern army, it might certainly maintain Ticonderoga till the rigour of the season and the freezing of the lake should compel the enemy to retire into Canada for winter quarters. In the mean time, he recommended the securing of all the cattle and horses in the country behind them, in order to deprive the British army, if it should slip by Ticonderoga, of the means of conveying the artillery, military stores, and baggage, or of subsisting themselves.

These considerations seemed to have weighed also

also with the British general. After reconnoitring the works, and observing the steady countenance of the garrison, he thought it too late in the season to derive any solid advantages from laying siege to it this campaign, and therefore re-embarked his army and returned to Canada, where he placed it in winter quarters, as commodiously as the country would admit, making the isle Auxnoix his advanced post.

It has been supposed, that this retreat of General Carleton was an ill-judged measure; and that Ticonderoga might have been taken without any considerable loss; in which case the army might have wintered on the lake, and have commenced its operations early in the spring from that point.

The probability of success in any attempt on Ticonderoga, very much depended on the conduct which might be observed by a considerable part of the garrison, composed of troops from Pennsylvania and Jersey, whose terms of service expired in October. If their aid could have been depended on, the place could not have been taken without great loss. But this circumstance certainly rendered the situation of the army extremely critical.

It must be admitted too, that wintering an army on lake George, whose supplies were to be drawn from Canada, would have been attended with great difficulty, and that the attempt, at that late season,

season, to penetrate the then dreary and inhospitable wilderness between that place and Albany, would have been extremely hazardous, if at all practicable.

This retreat, however, relieved very much the apprehensions of the Americans, and enabled General Gates, at the instance of the commander in chief, to march, with a considerable detachment of the northern army, now just about to be disbanded, to join him on the Delaware.

The great superiority of the British army under Howe, in point of number, was such as to induce in its general the opinion that some impression might be made to the eastward, without endangering or impeding in any manner the execution of his plans against New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Indeed, it might well be supposed, that by creating a diversion in that quarter, and alarming those states for their own safety, their attention would be particularly directed to the protection of themselves; and they might be deterred from affording to the grand army that aid which might be expected from their energy of character, and to which their zeal in the common cause would probably prompt them.

Accordingly, an expedition was planned against Rhode-Island. The land forces, amounting to about three thousand men, were commanded by General Sir Henry Clinton, and the fleet to be

employ

employed in the service, was entrusted to Sir Peter Parker. They sailed from New York about the last of November, and, without any material opposition, took possession of the island on which Newport, the capital of that state, stands, and gave, for a short time, a very serious alarm to the states of Massachussetts and Connecticut, who apprehended an invasion of the neighbouring continent. This diversion produced, in a considerable degree, the effect which was, most probably, one of the motives for the expedition. On being pressed through the Jerseys, with an army daily diminishing in numbers, General Washington had called on Massachussetts for a reinforcement of militia; and six thousand men, under General Lincoln, had been ordered immediately to join him. Their march, as well as the march of the militia of Connecticut, was for a time suspended, for the purpose of watching the enemy in Rhode-Island.

Independent of this temporary effect, the English derived permanent advantage, and the Americans sustained lasting inconveniences from the possession of this post by the former. The American ships of war and privateers had greatly annoyed the British commerce, and had rendered, by supplies thus obtained, most essential service to their country in the course of the war. The harbour of Newport, one of the most convenient in

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the United States, was, while in possession of the Americans, well calculated to favour these expeditions, and, while in possession of the enemy, was as well calculated to restrain them. Its contiguity to the sea coast of Massachussetts, where the spirit of maritime adventure had been carried much higher than in any other part of the United States, and from whence the commerce of the enemy had sustained the greatest injury, gave it additional importance.

It was also matter of serious regret, that Commodore Hopkins, with a considerable part of his squadron, and a number of privateers, were found in Providence River, where they were closely blocked up.

During these military transactions, many events occurred, which, though of minor importance, were too interesting to remain altogether unnoticed.

The part which might be taken in the present contest by the numerous warlike tribes of savages, inhabiting that immense territory west of the settlements made by the Europeans, and extending from the northern boundary of Canada to the gulf of Mexico, was a matter of real interest to the belligerent powers, and early apprehensions were entertained that they would engage actively on the side of the British. Sir John Johnson possessed great influence over the Indians of the lakes, and

and he exercised that influence to arrange them in offensive war against America. This in no small degree embarrassed General Washington. To seize this gentlemen, who was greatly beloved by the savages, would, it was feared, so irritate, as to precipitate them into immediate hostilities; while much was apprehended from his machinations, if left at liberty to prosecute them. Very early exertions were made to counteract them, and to secure the neutrality of the Indians. So early as July 1775, commissioners were appointed to hold a treaty with them, and very earnest endeavours were used to explain to them the nature of the controversy between the then colonies and the mother country; and to impress them with a sense of the injustice meditated against the former by the latter. The object of these representations, however, was not to engage them in the war, but to keep them out of it.

A treaty was, in conformity with the wishes of Congress, negociated with the Six Nations, in which they stipulated to observe neutrality; and as General Schuyler, who had been one of the commissioners, and who commanded in that department, possessed an hereditary influence over them, hopes were entertained that this neutrality would be faithfully observed. As a means indispensably necessary to the maintenance of their friendship, trade was opened with them, and

Congress

Congress determined to supply them, if possible, with those European articles which, from long use, had become necessaries.

These supplies being unavoidably small and precarious, indications were soon given of a disposition to take part in the war. General Washington, who had in early life become acquainted with their character and dispositions, who knew their avidity for spoil and presents, and their warlike temper, was persuaded of the extreme difficulty of continuing them in a state of neutrality; and on their offering to take up arms, after they had stipulated to be neutral, he urged that they should be engaged to take part with America, as the only means of preventing them from joining the enemy.

A plan had been formed by Lord Dunmore, through the agency of a Mr. Connelly, to induce the Indians to co-operate with him, and with the numerous loyalists of the back country, in a very extensive scheme for attacking the western parts of Virginia; but this was defeated by the detection and apprehension of the agent to be employed in it. It was however renewed on a more extensive scale, and the agents of the crown, in the southern country, whether with or without the authority of their master is uncertain, by presents and the hope of plunder, easily stimulated the Creeks and the Cherokees to agree to take up arms, and join

a detachment of British troops, who were to land in West Florida, and proceed through their country against the frontiers of the Carolinas and Virginia; whilst another formidable armament should make an impression on their sea coast. Circular letters to the same import were sent by Mr. Stuart, the principal agent for Indian affairs, to the inhabitants of the back settlements, requiring all those who were well affected to the crown, as well as those who were willing to preserve themselves and their families from the inevitable calamities and destruction of an Indian war, to repair to the royal standard as soon as it should be erected in the Cherokee country, and to bring with them their horses, cattle, and provisions, for all of which they were promised payment. They were likewise required, for their present security, and future distinction from the king's enemies, to subscribe immediately to a written paper, declaratory of their allegiance. Copies of all the papers relative to this plan, together with several other letters from Lord Dunmore, were intercepted on their way to Boston, in December 1775, and laid before General Washington.

The scheme was so plausible, that its effect was very extensive among the southern Indians, who, with a few exceptions, appear to have entered into the confederacy. Even the Six Nations, notwithstanding their late treaty of neutrality, manifested hostile

hostile dispositions; and it was at one time deemed necessary to call out the frontier militia to oppose them. They however did not proceed to extremities, and, not receiving the expected aid, their elders and chiefs disclaimed the acts of aggression which had been committed by some of their young men, and the validity of these excuses was very willingly admitted by the American government.

In the south, the Creeks, too impatient to await the arrival of the promised succours, commenced the war with their usual barbarity. Finding that the fleets and armies they had expected did not arrive on the sea coast, or in West Florida, and that the war would be prosecuted against them with vigour, they very prudently stopped short, and made their peace.

The operations of the Cherokees were more extensive, and of longer continuance. Their whole force was exerted. They made sudden irruptions into the country, which they laid waste in their usual manner, scalping and murdering, indiscriminately, the mother with her infant, as well as those who were capable of bearing arms against them. Their first incursions were made about the time when fort Moultrie was attacked by the fleet under the command of Sir Peter Parker. As this fleet soon withdrew from the coast, and no regular force appeared in aid of the savages to cover the

country, the disaffected could not safely embody, and were therefore not distinguished from others. They suffered, with their families, a full portion of the common calamity, and the royal cause was far from being strengthened by this premature war of massacre and depredation.*

These barbarities were not long unpunished. In aid of some regular regiments ordered on that service, the frontier inhabitants of the Carolinas and Virginia, equal to the Indians as marksmen and as woodsmen, and not inferior to them in courage, took up arms generally, beat the enemy, and carried the war into their own country, where they burnt their corn and destroyed their towns. In this distress, they asked assistance from the Creeks, who returned for answer to their application, that "they," the Cherokees, "had plucked the thorn out of their foot, and were welcome to keep it." Disappointed in receiving the aid they had expected, they were compelled to sue for peace, which was readily granted them.†

In pursuance of the policy which had been recommended by General Washington, some attempts were made to counteract the efforts of the enemy, to arm the Indians against the United States, by authorizing the commander in chief to engage a number of them, not exceeding two

* Ramsay. † Ibid.

thousand,

thousand, in the American service. In consequence of letters which General Washington had addressed to the chiefs among the tribes of Nova Scotia, a treaty was entered into between the government of Massachussetts, and the St. John's and Mickmac Indians, in which the warriors of those tribes engaged to enter into the service of the United States, on the same terms, and for the same compensation, which was allowed to American citizens. Some few of the Stockbridge Indians also joined the army of the commander in chief, while in the state of New York; but these people abandoned it when they were most needed, and no real service was ever afforded by them.* Colonel Gist was authorized, in January 1777, to engage five hundred Cherokees; but he did not succeed in this attempt.

The peculiar nature of the war, a war between

* It may perhaps be urged that the Americans are themselves chargeable with the odium cast upon their enemy for employing these savages, since they have themselves manifested a willingness to use the same instruments: but this observation will not be perfectly correct. The original effort of Congress was to keep them neutral, and the attempt to employ them was only made to counteract the intrigues which were used to bring them into the British service. In addition to this, those in the American service could only act against men in arms; those in the British service against age, infancy, and the helpless sex.

a sovereign, and those who, in its commencement, still professed themselves to be his subjects, gave birth to several circumstances not usual among belligerent powers, and of which the cause was no sufficient justification. Among these, the most interesting was the treatment of prisoners.

General Gage, who had been appointed governor of Massachussetts, had received, in that station, all the irritations of which his mind was susceptible;—irritations which, as too frequently happens, seem to have been retained by him in his character of commander in chief of the British forces in America; and to have had no inconsiderable share of influence over his conduct in that capacity. He considered the Americans merely as rebels, and treated them as if the great national resistance they were now making on principle, was only to be considered as the act of a few daring and turbulent spirits, rising against laws of unquestionable obligation, who would soon be quelled, and punished for their disobedience to legitimate authority; and who would never possess, or would never dare to use, the means of retaliating the injuries inflicted on them. In this spirit, so well calculated to add to the calamities of war, and to increase the miseries of the human race, some distinguished characters in Boston, especially Mr. Lovel, and the American officers and soldiers who fell into his hands, were thrown into

into the common gaol of felons, and treated, without respect to military rank or condition, not as prisoners of war, but as state criminals.

This measure was remonstrated against by General Washington, who considering political opinion entirely out of the question, and "conceiving the obligations of humanity, and the claims of rank, to be universally binding, except in the case of retaliation, expressed the hope he had entertained, that they would have induced, on the part of the British general, a conduct more conformable to the rights they gave. While he claimed the benefit of these rights, he declared his determination to be regulated entirely in his conduct towards the prisoners who should fall into his hands, by the treatment which those in the power of the British should receive."

To this letter a very haughty and intemperate answer was returned, in which complaints concerning the treatment of prisoners were retorted; and it was affected to be considered as an instance of clemency, that the cord was not applied to those whose imprisonment was complained of. To this answer, for which not even the then peculiar state of things can afford a palliative, General Washington gave a manly and dignified reply; which was, he said, "to close their correspondence, perhaps, for ever;" and which he concluded with saying, "If your officers, our prisoners, receive from me

a treatment different from what I wished to shew them, they and you will remember the occasion of it."

The result of this correspondence was communicated to the council of Massachussetts, who were requested to order the British officers then at Watertown, and elsewhere, on parole, to be confined in close gaol, and the soldiers to be sent to such place of security as the general court should direct. He requested that the motives for this conduct, which might otherwise appear harsh and cruel, should be explained to those who suffered under it, and the effect attributed to its real cause. On the recal of General Gage, the command devolved on Sir William Howe, whose conduct was less exceptionable; and this rigorous treatment of prisoners was soon relaxed.

Not long after this, Colonel Ethan Allen, a gentleman remarkable for the boldness and enterprise of his character, who had distinguished himself among those parties that took the forts on the lakes, and who was ambitious of continuing to acquire fame, and to render service, not in the ordinary routine of duty, advanced against Montreal at the head of a few volunteers, while General Montgomery was employed before St. John's. This bold, but rash, project, was soon disconcerted. His party was routed, and himself made prisoner. Under pretext of his having acted

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without authority, he was thrown into irons, and sent to England as a traitor.

On being informed of this treatment, and while he was yet in Canada, Congress requested the commander in chief to inquire into the fact. A letter was thereupon addressed to Sir William Howe, requiring an explanation, and assuring him that General Prescott, who had been taken in Canada, and who was understood to have contributed to the injuries inflicted on Colonel Allen, should receive exactly the fate of that officer.

General Howe not holding any authority in Canada, or not choosing to answer the letter, General Schuyler was directed to make particular inquiries into the conduct of General Prescott; and Congress, on being informed of the result of the application, ordered that officer into close confinement.*

A physician and his servant were permitted to attend him; and, on the report of the former, that in his delicate state of health, the damps of a gaol might endanger his life, he was removed to private lodgings, where he was still guarded for the avowed purpose of experiencing the doom which might be inflicted on Colonel Allen. The other prisoners

* Congress also directed an application to General Carleton on this subject; and General Schuyler was requested by the commander in chief to send a flag respecting it.

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of war continued to be treated with all the indulgence compatible with their security.

On the arrival of Admiral and General Howe at New York, the system, which had been so long absurdly maintained, was abandoned, and an exchange of prisoners was agreed on.*

There was not, however, in the hands of the Americans, a sufficient number of prisoners to redeem those taken from them by the enemy; and consequently, many of their citizens still remained in confinement. From them, complaints were continually received, of experiencing the most severe and cruel treatment. They complained of suffering almost the extremity of famine, and

* The American regulations for the custody of their prisoners had heretofore been such, that this agreement was slowly executed. No commissary of prisoners having been appointed, they had been turned over to the different states and committees, and it became necessary to search out and collect them, in order to their exchange. Great delays were unavoidably produced by this state of things, and the suffering Americans were taught to impute the continuance of their captivity to their own general. In addition to this, it not unfrequently happened, that the British prisoners were sent in without the knowledge of General Washington, and, in some cases, they passed unobserved, with permits from the state authority, through his camp, directly into that of the enemy. In consequence of these irregularities, and the remonstrances of the commander in chief, a commissary of prisoners was at length appointed, and exchanges were regularly made.

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that even the scanty supply of provisions allowed them was unsound. In addition to this, they were crowded into prison ships, where, their wants being entirely unattended to, they became the victims of disease. These disgraceful measures were supposed to have been taken in order to compel the wretched sufferers to engage in the British service. When charged with a conduct so unworthy his character and station, Sir William Howe positively denied its truth. It would certainly be unjust to ascribe to an officer, who, though perhaps severe in his temper, did not mingle in his general system, cruelties which would not have been practised in other wars, a degree of inhumanity to those entirely in his power, which, if true, ought for ever to tarnish his reputation. It must be admitted that his own supplies of provisions were for a time not the best or most plentiful, and that the American soldiers, before being captured, were very sickly; but the excessive mortality prevailing among them can be accounted for on no ordinary principles; and those least inclined to criminate without cause, have ever been persuaded that, if his orders did not produce the distress which existed, his authority was certainly not interposed with sufficient energy to correct the abuses complained of. This inattention was the more extraordinary, as it was injurious to the British interest; for had those who had been taken prisoners in battle,

battle, been properly attended to, and their lives preserved, the enemy would have received soldiers in exchange for citizens whose terms of service had expired, and who might, or might not re-enlist.

The capture of General Lee furnished an additional ground of controversy on the subject of prisoners. As he had been an officer in the British service, whose resignation, perhaps, had not been received when he entered into that of America, a disposition was at first manifested to treat him as a deserter and a traitor, rather than as a prisoner of war. He was therefore closely confined, but does not appear to have experienced any other particular hardship. On receiving information of this circumstance, a resolution was entered into by Congress, directing General Howe to be assured, that if the exchange which was offered of the six field officers taken at Trenton for General Lee should be rejected, and the severe treatment already experienced by him continued, Lieutenant-colonel Campbell, and five Hessian field officers, should be detained, and should experience precisely the treatment which might be suffered by General Lee. This proposition not having been accepted, orders were given for putting this threat into execution. Lieutenant-colonel Campbell, and five Hessian field officers, were taken into close custody, and they were assured that the resolution abovementioned should be strictly enforced.

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The sentiments of the commander in chief on the subject of retaliation, seem to have been less severe than those of Congress. So great was his abhorrence of the cruelties such a practice seemed calculated to generate, that he thought it should only be adopted in a case of absolute and apparent necessity. Not believing that of General Lee to be such a case, he remonstrated* strongly to Con-

* The following is an extract of the letter addressed on the occasion by General Washington to Congress.

"Though I sincerely commiserate the misfortune of General Lee, and feel much for his present unhappy situation, yet with all possible deference to the opinion of Congress, I fear that their resolutions will not have the desired effect, are founded in impolicy, and will, if adhered to, produce consequences of an extensive and melancholy nature.

"Retaliation is certainly just, and sometimes necessary, even where attended with the severest penalties. But when the evils which may and must result from it exceed those intended to be redressed, prudence and policy require that it should be avoided.

"Having premised thus much, I beg leave to examine the justice and expediency of it in the instance before us. From the best information I have been able to obtain, General Lee's usage has not been so disgraceful and dishonourable, as to authorize the treatment decreed to those gentlemen, was it not prohibited by many other important considerations. His confinement, I believe, has been more rigorous than has been generally experienced by the rest of our officers, or those of the enemy who have been in our possession; but if the reports received on that head be true, he has been provided with a decent apartment, and with most things necessary to render him

gress on the impolicy of their resolutions, and stated the long train of evils which were to be

him comfortable This is not the case with one of the officers comprehended in the resolves, if his letter, of which a copy is transmitted, deserves your credit. Here retaliation seems to have been prematurely begun, or to speak with more propriety, severities have been, and are exercised towards Colonel Campbell, not justified by any that General Lee has yet received.

"In point of policy, and under the present situation of our affairs, most surely the doctrine cannot be supported. The balance of prisoners is greatly against us, and a general regard to the happiness of the whole should mark our conduct. Can we imagine that our enemies will not mete the same punishments, the same indignities, the same cruelties, to those belonging to us in their possession, that we impose on theirs? Why should we suppose them to have more humanity than we possess ourselves? Or why should an ineffectual attempt to relieve the distresses of one brave man, involve many more in misery? At this time, however disagreeable the fact may be, the enemy have in their power, and subject to their call, nearly three hundred officers belonging to the army of the United States. In this number there are some of high rank, and the most of them are men of bravery, and of merit. The quota of theirs in our hands bears no proportion, not being more than fifty. Under these circumstances, we certainly should do no act to draw upon the gentlemen belonging to us, and who have already suffered a long captivity, greater punishments than they now experience. If we should, what will be their feelings, and those of their numerous and extensive connections? Suppose the treatment prescribed for the Hessian officers should be pursued, will it not establish what the enemy have been aiming to effect by every artifice, and the grossest misrepresentations? I mean, an opinion of

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apprehended from them. But on this subject Congress remained inflexible; and the officers designated as the objects for retaliation, were kept in rigorous confinement, till General Lee was declared to be a prisoner of war.

The resolutions of Congress, too, respecting the prisoners taken at the Cedars, produced no small degree of embarrassment and chagrin to the commander in chief. On the allegation that the terms of capitulation had been infringed on the part of the enemy, and that the savages had been permitted to murder some of the prisoners, and to plunder others, they withheld their sanction from the agreement entered into by General Arnold with Captain Forster, and refused to allow other prisoners to be returned in exchange for those liberated under that agreement, till the murderers should be given up, and compensation should be made for the baggage said to have been plundered.

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our enmity towards them, and of the cruel conduct they experience when they fall into our hands; a prejudice which we, on our part, have heretofore thought it politic to suppress, and root out by every act of kindness and of lenity. It certainly will. The Hessians will hear of the punishments, with all the circumstances of heightened exaggeration, and would feel the injury without investigating the cause, or reasoning upon the justice of it. The mischiefs which may and must inevitably flow from the execution of the resolves, appear to be endless and innumerable."

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The fact alleged was by no means so clearly established, that the common opinion of mankind must at once have been pronounced in favour of the justice of the decision made by Congress. Indeed it was explicitly denied by some American officers, who were among the prisoners, and particularly by Captain Sullivan, who had been delivered up as one of the hostages for the performance of the treaty.

Sir William Howe pressed General Washington very closely on this subject. He reminded him of the importance of a punctilious observance of faith, plighted in engagements like that made by General Arnold, and he persisted to hold the commander in chief personally bound for an honourable compliance with military stipulations, entered into by an officer under his authority.

General Washington felt the keenness of the reproach, and was urgent with Congress to change their resolutions on the subject; but his remonstrances were for a long time unavailing.

After the sufferings of the prisoners in New York had been extreme, and great numbers had perished in confinement, the survivors were liberated, and sent out for the purpose of being exchanged; but so miserable was their condition, that great numbers of them died on their way home. For the dead, as well as the living, the British general claimed a return of prisoners; and

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on the peremptory refusal of General Washington to comply with his demand, and on his refusing also to exchange Lieutenant-colonel Campbell, and some Hessian officers taken at Trenton, till General Lee should be declared a prisoner of war, a very offensive letter was written to him by Lieutenant-colonel Walcott, who had been employed to settle the terms of a general cartel, which produced an angry correspondence between the commanders of the two armies, which exhibits the charges of the one, and the defence of the other.

The complaints of America on this subject seemed the better founded, because Sir William Howe had rejected an application made to him by General Washington, to permit an agent for furnishing their prisoners with necessary supplies to reside in New-York.

The advantages derived by America from her maritime exertions have already been cursorily noticed. Notwithstanding the efforts made in every other direction, it would have been absolutely impracticable to have obtained sufficient quantities of ammunition for the immediate use of the army, but for some fortunate captures, and successful enterprises, made at sea, either by the ships of war belonging to Congress, or by privateers fitted out by individuals. The supplies of that essential article, even with the aid derived from this source, were precarious, and entirely inade-

quate to the exigencies of the war; but without those aids, it would seem that the military operations of the army must not only have been enfeebled, but entirely suspended.

It was not in the capture of ammunition and arms only, that the enterprising naval spirit of the Americans rendered essential service to their country. The non-importation agreements which preceded the war, and excluded the usual supply of goods for ordinary consumption, had left the continent, in a great measure, destitute of articles necessary to clothe its inhabitants in the accustomed manner. Internal manufactures had supplied, but in a very small degree, the deficiency produced by non-importation; and when Congress proceeded to raise an army, the continent scarcely afforded the clothes or blankets necessary for its use. The sufferings for these articles, though greatest in the army, were extended to citizens in private life. The want of them was felt universally. This want was relieved, in some degree, by captures from the enemy at sea. The goods thus taken would, at any period, and in any state of things, have constituted an item well worth attention; but at this time they were of inestimable value. The prizes made by the American cruisers in the year 1776, are said, by some English writers, to have been estimated at one million sterling; and their amount is believed, in America, to have been more

more considerable. It has been stated by persons conversant with that subject, that the captures made by the cruisers of Massachussets alone, exceeded those made by France and Spain in any one year of the war which terminated in 1763.

Unfortunately, Congress did not in time adopt the system of clothing their troops themselves; and though, in the beginning of 1776, the secret committee was charged with taking measures to import a large quantity of clothing, yet they did not arrive to supply the wants of that year. For want of those timely exertions, which probably would have been made, had the system of furnishing clothes from the continental stores been originally adopted, many prize clothes, which might have saved from disease and death, soldiers exposed to the hardships of a winter campaign, were suffered to pass into the hands of individuals. In the eastern country, where these prizes were generally brought, the local governments were able to make some provision for the clothing of their quotas of troops; but the sufferings of the quotas of the middle and southern states, as far as Virginia inclusive, during the severe winter campaign of 1776-7, were extreme.

It having been understood that a large quantity of ammunition was in the royal magazines in the island of New Providence, Commodore Hopkins, with the fleet consisting of five vessels, the largest

of which carried twenty nine-pounders on her lower deck, and six ten-pounders on her upper deck, was detached to seize it, and bring it to the continent. The delays after landing were such, that the governor obtained intelligence of his approach, long enough before he reached the town, to remove the powder; and thus the expedition failed of its principal object; but other military stores of considerable value were taken; and on its return, the fleet made several prizes.

On the east end of Long Island, Commodore Hopkins fell in with the Glasgow, Captain Howe, carrying twenty nine-pounders, and an engagement ensued, which lasted several hours. The Glasgow, after having damaged the vessels of the American flotilla very considerably, made all sail for Newport, and was not pursued. That she was able to maintain close fight, a considerable time, with a force so very superior to her own, and then to extricate herself from it, excited some chagrin in America, and the conduct of the commodore was very much censured.

When the seat of war was transferred to New York, and some of the British ships passed up the north river, an experiment was made of the efficacy of a defence by gallies, which had been in some degree relied on. A detachment of soldiers was put on board them, and the Phœnix, lying at anchor in the bay of Haverstraw, was attacked by them.

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The experiment turned out unfavourably. The Phœnix sustained little, if any injury, and the gallies were repulsed with the loss of several of them, which were sunk in the action.

The extraordinary spectacle has been exhibited of thirteen distinct colonies, possessing at first no legitimate government, and afterwards, when they became states, possessing governments entirely independent of each other, carrying on, conjointly, by themselves, and by their deputies, a burdensome war against one of the most powerful nations of the world; raising armies on the most expensive, as well as dangerous, establishment; carrying on distant expeditions, and equipping an efficient, though a small navy; without commercce and without revenue. Credit became a substitute for revenue; but it required all the zeal and enthusiasm which then animated the bosoms of individuals, and which silenced for a time every calculation of cold and interested prudence, to furnish this substitute.

Congress emitted paper money, and pledged the faith of their constituents for its redemption. The opinion was almoſt universal, that this faith would be sacredly observed. In some of the colonies, as in Virginia, depreciation had never been known. Only small sums of paper had been issued, and those sums had been mostly called in by taxes, without having ever taken a real, infe-

rior to their nominal value. Among persons thus circumstanced, paper was received without suspicion, and its depreciation was not soon observed. To the eastward and further to the southward, where the subject was better understood, the enthusiam with which they engaged in the contest, and the hope that it would not be of long duration, furnished motives for giving a value to paper, which overbalanced the apprehensions that their past experience might otherwise have excited.

There were other causes, which, in some degree, aided the first admission of paper bills into common circulation. The nature of the colonial commerce had not been favourable to the introduction of large quantities of specie. There were in America but few large cities. The people were spread over an extensive country, covered with woods, which they cleared with immense labour, and the soil of which they cultivated for subsistence. Having but little of that circuitous commerce, of which the precious metals will necessarily, in part, constitute a medium, their produce was remitted directly to the country from whence their goods were received, and the surplus almost immediately assumed the form of labour, for the cultivation and improvement of their lands. This was more especially the situation of the middle and southern colonies, whose commerce was chiefly

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in the hands of British merchants, who received the crops of the planters, furnished them with goods, and gave the industrious credit for the purchase of lands or slaves: This species of commerce would introduce and require, in a new country, but very inconsiderable quantities of the precious metals.

When the intercourse with Great Britain was cut off, and the credit of the people of the country with their merchants no longer existed, a part of the gold and silver in circulation, at no time equal to the demand, disappeared. This was produced, in part, by remittances to Europe; in part, by collections made by government for essential purposes, among which was the expedition to Canada; and, perhaps, still more by being hoarded up by those who, not being under the influence of the general feeling, foresaw the effects which must be produced by the large emissions the war would render inevitable. This diminution of the quantity of the precious metals, connected with the loss of that particular species of credit which had been found to be a substitute for specie, produced a real necessity for a circulating medium, to answer the ordinary purposes of society. This necessity, which for the moment was very sensibly felt, co-operated with the real patriotism of the great body of the people, to facilitate the circulation, on a par with gold and silver, of bills of cre-

dit issued by an authority which all acknowledged. And although no specific funds were pledged for their redemption, nor were there any in the power of government, in any degree, competent to that object, yet common opinion supplied the want of these substantial requisites; and he would have been thought a traitor to his country, who had manifested a suspicion that the public faith would not be religiously observed. On this delicate subject, a resolution of Congress was passed so early as January, 1776, denouncing against those who should discourage the circulation of the paper money, the penalty of being held up as enemies of their country.

It was, however, impossible that this delusion could be permanent, or that it should, in the first instance, be complete with men of reflection and experience. Although a confidence in the engagements of government might not for a time be shaken; yet, as the paper bills were continually emitted, without being capable of finding their way into other countries, it was impossible to conceal from those who would permit themselves to think, the dangerous truth, that the mere quantity in circulation would so sensibly impair their value, as to render impracticable their redemption at par.

This truth, however, which was not universally perceived, was cautiously concealed by the friends

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of the revolution, and, if uttered by its enemies, the declaration was deemed a crime which merited the severest punishment.

Aware, however, that it must in time be betrayed by its effects, the utmost exertions of Congress were used to procrastinate, as much as possible, an event, the arrival of which, should the war be of long continuance, was foreseen to be inevitable; and which must be attended with difficulties there were no apparent means of surmounting. The emissions, therefore, were as small as possible, and the disbursements of money were so parsimonious, as almost to produce the mischief dreaded from that absolute want of pecuniary resources, which would be experienced when the public credit should fail.

But it was not in the power of Congress to regulate the amount of bills which should thus come into circulation. The right to emit them was possessed by every local government, as well as by that of the union, and this right was liberally exercised.

The consequences of thus augmenting the quantity of bills put into circulation, were foreseen with trembling apprehensions, while the means for counteracting the mischief could only be recommended.

To œconomize disbursements, and to call in by taxes a part of the sums disbursed, thereby diminishing

nishing the quantity and increasing the demand, were the only possible means of preventing such an accumulation of paper money, as infallibly to continue its depreciation, till it should entirely cease to be a circulating medium. The disbursements were placed in too many hands to be œconomized, and the power of taxation was not in Congress. That body could only recommend the imposition of taxes, and their recommendations were, perhaps, the less attended to, because, whatever might be the public exigencies, the measure was at all times unpopular, and could only be effectual by being universal. It was most earnestly recommended, first to the several colonies, and then to the states, to adopt measures to redeem their quotas of the bills of credit emitted by Congress; but such was the danger apprehended from immediate taxation, that the payment of the first instalment of the first emission was to be postponed till 1779, by which time it was certain the depreciation must be considerable. This can be accounted for only by the difficulty of collecting taxes before the declaration of independence; the difficulty of paying them without commerce; and the fear that their burden might detach many from a war avowedly undertaken to oppose taxation.

In consequence of these, or other causes, taxation was not commenced till depreciation had made

made considerable progress; and then the remedy was so sparingly applied, as very little to affect the disease. Indeed, it remains to this moment uncertain, whether the good or the ill which would have been produced by an early attention to this subject, and a different conduct, would most have predominated; whether the advantages of checking depreciation, or the discontents it would have excited, would most have operated on the war.

Taxation, the unpleasant, but only effectual mode of preventing as much as possible the rapid increase of the quantity of paper money in circulation, being rejected, as an experiment too dangerous to be made, artificial substitutes were resorted to. A loan was proposed to be opened for borrowing five million of continental dollars, on an interest of four per centum per annum, the principal to be repaid in three years. For the accommodation of lenders, an office was to be opened in each state, and the interest was to be paid annually, and the principal returned in the state where the loan was made. No certificate of loan was to be granted for a less sum than three hundred dollars. A hope was entertained, that the loan would fill immediately; that it would diminish the quantity of money in circulation; and that the certificates issued in lieu of the money received, would not be brought into ordinary use, so as to take the place of the money borrowed.

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In addition to the greater value of the certificates from their bearing interest, it was supposed that the largeness of the sums would unfit them for ordinary purposes.

The scheme of a lottery in four classes was also suggested, by which it was proposed to raise, at different periods, about one million five hundred thousand dollars; but the principal advantage contemplated was, to draw in a large sum of continental money by the sales of the tickets, to retain, with the consent of the successful adventurers, the small prizes in each class for tickets in the succeeding class, and the large prizes on loan.

These experiments were of small avail. The effects of a cause so certain and so powerful in its operations, the action of which was so perpetual, could not have been prevented by any means in the power of the United States; and could have been retarded only by measures infinitely more energetic than these, or perhaps any others that could safely have been used.

Notwithstanding the large emissions which were unavoidably made, and the absolute want of any other fund than the public faith to support their credit, no difference between paper money and specie was generally perceived, till the campaign of 1776 had far advanced.

The real depreciation, early in 1777, became considerable; but it was still mistaken by many for

for a rise in the price of every article brought to market, and it was thought practicable to check it by the application of violent remedies.

In a resolution for the purpose of keeping up the value of the bills of credit issued by Congress, and of guarding against the pernicious artifices of the enemies of American liberty to impair their credit, it is declared, "that whoever, in any purchase, sale, or barter, whatever, shall rate gold or silver coin higher than the continental bills of credit, ought to be deemed an enemy to the liberties of the United States, and to forfeit the value of the money, or other thing, in the purchase, sale, or barter, of which this difference of value was made;" and it was recommended to the several states to pass laws to this effect.

It was also recommended to the respective legislatures to pass laws declaring these bills a tender in payment of all debts, and that a refusal of them, when tendered, should amount to an abolition of the debt.

These attempts to regulate by law the value of an article depending solely on public opinion, were accompanied by other recommendations, better calculated to produce the desired effect.

The public faith had indeed been plighted by Congress for the redemption of their bills; but the substantial power to perform the engagement rested with the state sovereignties. In the first moments

moments of the war, a suspicion that these sovereignties could have failed, or hesitated to comply with the recommendations made, or engagements entered into by Congress, for the common benefit, would have been deemed highly criminal, and might have subjected the person who harboured it to the very serious charge of hostility to American liberty. But to engage the different states to pledge themselves for the redemption of these bills at the time fixed by Congress, was now thought a prop to their credit, not to be disregarded; and it was recommended to them to pass resolutions to that effect.

It was also earnestly recommended to them to commence, at an earlier period than had been at first proposed, the only plan which could afford effectual aid, and immediately to impose such taxes as the present actual situation of the people would enable them to pay. They were assured, that for all monies thus raised, each state should receive a credit with the United States, in its quota of the public debt that had been apportioned on them. At the same time a further loan of two millions was voted. On receiving these recommendations, laws were passed in the several states in conformity with the wishes of Congress.

The commercial situation of the states from Maryland inclusive to the south, previous to the commencement of the war, rendered it indispensable

sable to the objects of justice, that some provision should be made for cases not contemplated in the resolutions of Congress.

The commerce of that extensive country had been principally in the hands of British merchants, and almost exclusively carried on by British capital. In various parts of it, American citizens had established a credit with British mercantile houses to a greater or less extent, according to which goods were shipped to them, which they retailed also on credit. Annual remittances were made to a considerable amount; but there remained always due to the wholesale merchant, from the retailer of his goods, a large sum, which was in the hands of the planters, who generally preserved a credit equal to their crops. In consequence of the valuable staples possessed by those colonies, this credit was extensive, and these debts amounted to a very considerable sum. The British merchants, to whom they were ultimately payable, were now in Europe, and their agents had left the country.

To compel the American merchant, by force of penal laws, to receive the debt relied on to enable him to discharge that contracted by the original purchase of the goods, in an article which might become worthless, while his responsibility remained, and his debt, unimpaired in value, was accumulating with interest, was deemed an injury to the American citizen, which justice ought to forbid

bid any government to practise. At the same time, therefore, that laws were passed compelling the American to receive his debts in paper, he was authorised to pay those due from him into the public treasury, and solemnly assured, that this act should discharge him for ever from the claims of his creditor.

We shall perceive in the sequel that this coercive system was incapable of producing the object for which it was adopted. The loans probably retarded for a time the progress of depreciation; but taxes not having been imposed early, or so heavily as the public exigencies required, the value of the money, in spite of every effort to prevent it, sunk so low, that the denominations of the bills became equal to the loan office certificates, and they, in a great degree came also into circulation. After this state of things, loans could no longer be of any utility.

When it is recollected that the parties to the war had been members of the same empire; that no practical oppression had been generally experienced; but that the contest was a contest of principle, in which a claim was resisted in its commencement, on the mere ground of right, the pressure of which had not been felt; it will readily be supposed that some contrariety of opinion must have prevailed in every stage of the controversy. In its origin there were very few who took

took a decisive part in support of the claims of administration. The opposition was made by the most active, energetic, and intelligent; and being an opposition to taxation, the ultimate consequences of which were neither generally foreseen nor apprehended, was, of course, very popular; and those who would not then have been willing to encounter the difficulties and dangers afterwards experienced, either joined their countrymen, or suffered themselves to be borne along with the great mass, without inquiring what would be the future result of the present measures.

As the contest assumed a more serious aspect, and became better understood, causes of irritation multiplied, and real injuries were sustained. The number of those who were determined, at every hazard, to maintain the principle asserted by America, greatly increased: but the party disaffected to this opposition, assumed a more distinct form, and in many parts of the union appeared in greater force than had been at first apprehended.

So soon as fears were entertained that the pen might be laid aside, and an appeal be made to the sword, many were found unwilling to encounter the danger and the hazards of the contest; and to be more disposed to admit the supremacy of the British parliament, and trust to their not abusing it, than to risk every thing in order to maintain a principle not deemed by all of equal importance.

These men, who were viewed with infinite contempt and detestation by those who believed that to submit to taxation, unaccompanied by representation, was the essence of slavery, were denominated tories; and were exposed to the resentment of their neighbours who entertained the prevailing opinions.

The nominal government not having been yet changed, and all concurring in professions of allegiance to the British crown, even after hostilities had commenced, no pains or penalties could be ordained by law for persons of this description; but they were held up as enemies to the liberties of America, after which their condition was worse than if subjected to prosecution, according to legal rules, for offences against established laws.

In many places, where their numbers were considerable, they manifested a disposition to take up arms, and to enforce their opinions by the sword. In North Carolina they collected in a very formidable body, but were soon dispersed; and in New York similar dispositions were manifested. Great numbers of the inhabitants of what was then termed Tryon county, were disaffected; and General Schuyler marched into the country at the head of a large body of militia, when a negociation was entered into with Sir John Johnson, their leader, which terminated in a kind of capitulation, in which Sir John and the tories of his neighbourhood

hood agreed to surrender their arms, and stipulated to take no part in the existing contest. The neighbourhood of the British army enabled those of the lower parts of that state to join the royal standard without danger.

With respect to persons of this description, the conduct of those who guided the councils of America was, at first, truly lenient. Those taken in arms were treated as prisoners of war, and those from whom danger was apprehended, were not otherwise proceeded against than to be disabled from committing the mischief they meditated.

Great confidence was placed by Congress in the force of reason, accompanied with gentle treatment; and it was supposed there would not be many disaffected, who were not also misinformed. Under this impression, the resolutions already mentioned, were passed in the beginning of 1776, recommending it strongly to the different committees, and other friends to American liberty, to explain to those who were honest, but misguided, the nature of the controversy, and the various steps which had been taken to effect an accommodation. It was also recommended to proceed with additional rigour against those more active characters, from whom danger was to be apprehended. It does not however appear, that any strong proceedings were had against the disaffected, in those parts of the country where they were

most powerful. In Long and York islands, where General Lee had been stationed, principally to counteract their machinations, they kept up, even after the commander in chief took possession of those places with the American army, a regular intercourse with Governor Tryon, and were detected in plans for co-operating with the enemy, after Lord and Sir William Howe should arrive. General Washington, it has been already observed, broke off this intercourse. He also pressed the adoption of such vigorous measures, as would certainly disable the disaffected from practising the injuries they contemplated. Their numbers, however, in that part of the country, were so considerable, as to produce an irresolution of conduct towards them; perhaps in the fear that decisive measures might drive them to arms on the first appearance of the enemy.

From the first moment that the contest wore so serious an aspect as to threaten hostilities, disaffection to the American cause took a decided form; and those under its influence were arranged, as a party, against those measures which were pursued by the real representatives of the people; yet numbers followed in the rear of the great mass of their countrymen, and, in a general view, were not distinguishable from them, till the declaration of independence was proposed.

This necessary measure seemed to cut up by the

roots

roots every hope of conciliation, and to render a re-union of the empire, which many still earnestly wished, impracticable, unless effected by conquest. Among these, there were many who persuaded themselves, that the commissioners, Lord and Sir William Howe, who were said to bear the olive branch as well as the sword, possessed powers which might constitute a proper basis of negotiation. This declaration amounted, at once, to a rejection of their terms, and left no road to peace but that which might be opened with the sword.

Where the previous measures of the continental and local governments had been cordially and generally supported, the public mind was completely prepared for this. In New England, Virginia, and a great part of South Carolina, scarcely a dissenting voice was raised against it. It was not only acceded to with alacrity when declared, but most ardently wished by all classes of people; and a clear disposition was manifested in all, and in some of them exercised, even to precede Congress, in making this declaration. From New York to Maryland inclusive, the people were more divided. Great bodies of disaffected were found, almost sufficient to neutralize such of those states as the enemy might invade. In North Carolina, a considerable majority of the country was friendly to independence; but in its bosom were powerful enemies, ready to seize the first opportunity which

might offer, for the manifestation of their hostility. Georgia was weak, and not united.

In this state of the public mind, the British fleet and army arrived at New York, and the Howes immediately commenced their military and diplomatic operations. They exerted themselves to strengthen the opinion, that they were clothed with pacific powers, which might effect an accommodation, if the bar created by the declaration of independence could be removed; while Congress, on the other hand, and the leaders of the revolution, every where maintained, that they could grant pardons only to those who would uncondially submit.

The British were received with open arms by the disaffected, as their deliverers from oppression. The militia of the islands were sufficiently relied on, to be embodied for their own defence, as the army advanced into the country; and New York and the Jerseys afforded corps of regulars, equal to their quotas in the American army.

The orders issued by General Howe, on his first taking possession of that country, assured his army, that they were to consider themselves among friends, and inhibited, under the severest penalties, every species of violence.* As they ad-

* For a violation of these orders, some soldiers were condemned and executed.

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vanced to the White Plains, the convention of the state entertained serious fears of a very extensive insurrection, and seem to have been apprehensive of the consequences of attempting to punish those who were known to be disaffected, and even of carrying that disaffection so far, as to encourage the enlisting of men in the British service. Fears were entertained, that the tories would seize the important passes in the highlands, and hold them for the enemy; and it was thought dangerous to attempt to call out the militia of some counties, lest their absence should encourage the disaffected behind them to embody.

Yet, while the seat of war was in New York, very essential aid was given by the militia of that state: but the main force of the army was drawn from New England. Such was the zeal and unanimity of those states, that while the enemy remained in their neighbourhood, requisitions for militia were uniformly complied with, and they enabled the American army to keep up a respectable appearance.

On entering the Jerseys, Lord Cornwallis issued similar orders to those which had been given by General Howe in Long Island, assuring the army, that the people in general were well affected towards them, and forbidding them to plunder or otherwise injure the inhabitants. The proclamation offering protection to those who would come

in, and take the oaths of allegiance within sixty days, also contained assurances, that the laws which had been complained of, and which had occasioned the war, would be revised.

The spirit of resistance in Jersey appeared to have nearly spent itself. The American cause was thought desperate. No manly effort was made in defence of their country, and a general disposition seemed to prevail among the people, to save themselves by submission. A few militia were in arms under General Williamson, whose indisposition compelled him to leave the service, after which they were commanded by General Dickenson; but the great body of the country was either with the enemy, or felt too little ardour for the common cause, to hazard their lives and fortunes in its support. When urged to take up arms, they answered, that "General Howe promised them peace, liberty, and safety, and they could require nothing further."

In Pennsylvania, too, a great abatement of zeal was manifested, and though a great part of the city of Philadelphia remained firm, many other parts of the state seemed unwilling to engage themselves deeper in a controversy, concerning the issue of which there was so much reason to doubt.

The condition of the American army, and the defects of its interior organization, have been occasionally noticed in relating the events of the war.

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A minute detail of all the errors in the military system of the United States would indeed display, but without affording instruction or amusement, the immense difficulties surmounted by the superior officers generally, and especially the commander in chief. A nation totally unskilled in the science of war, if even divested of prejudices which experience only can remove, would certainly, in creating an army, omit many essential parts, the indispensable necessity of which, time would shew. In no instance can this proposition ever be more completely verified, than it was during the war which terminated in the independence of the United States.

But there were certain cardinal errors which may be repeated, when the dangers they produced, and by which they were corrected, shall be forgotten. Of these the most material, and that which has been unavoidably most noticed, because it forms a most essential part of American history, was the too great reliance on militia, and the consequent short enlistments of the regular troops. Militia were not merely depended on as auxiliaries, and as covering the country from the sudden irruptions of small parties, for which purposes they ought certainly to be competent, and with a view to which, they will ever be important, but they were also relied on, as constituting the main body and strength of the army. Their absolute incapacity

pacity to maintain this station, in the military arrangements of any country, engaging in war with an enemy of nearly equal strength, employing a permanent force, at all times capable of being used to its utmost extent, was demonstrated to the conviction of scepticism itself; and, under the weight of this conviction, every effort was made by Congress, though almost too late, to remedy the extensive mischief which this fatal error had already produced, and not the least of these was the difficulty attending all attempts to cure it.

Men unaccustomed to submit their actions to the controul of others, bear impatiently that degree of authority, and submit reluctantly to that subordination so indispensably necessary to their own safety; and without which an army, to use the expression of General Washington, when struggling to reform abuses of the most dangerous nature, "is an armed mob," incapable of being applied to the purposes of its creation.

Raw soldiers, too, can seldom be induced to pay that attention to cleanliness, to their persons, their lodging, their food, and to many other minute circumstances, on which the health of a large body of men collected together essentially depends. They are, therefore, found to be infinitely more exposed to disease, and to be swept off by sickness in much greater numbers, than those who have been taught by experience the value of attending to

to those circumstances, which the young recruit never sufficiently appreciates. Of this, the unexampled mortality of both the northern and middle armies, furnished evidence as conclusive as it was melancholy.

The total change experienced too in their situation, their duties, and mode of living, contributes not a little to render the military life, in the first instance, unpleasant to those who engage in it.

Habit conquers these impressions, and removes many of the causes which produced them. We, therefore, often see the veteran attached to the camp. But regulars engaged only for a short time, and militia engaged for a still shorter time, receive all these unfavourable impressions, without remaining long enough for them to wear off. They consequently acquire a distaste for the service, and on their return home, not unfrequently spread among their friends and neighbours the prejudices imbibed by themselves.

These impediments to recruiting an army would, probably, after the war had been prosecuted for some time, occur in any state of things, where the facts producing them existed; but in America, other adventitious circumstances added greatly to their influence.

Two winter campaigns had been made, in the course of the last of which, the soldiers, exposed, half naked, to a climate of extreme rigour, suffered excessive

excessive hardships, to which were attributed the diseases under which a large portion of them perished. Old clothes had been collected for them in Philadelphia; but these supplies were late, and inadequate to their wants.

These causes checking the ardour at first felt by the youth of America for the service of their country, produced another effect, which, in its turn, operated as a powerful cause to prevent enlistments to serve during the war. When, from the defect of regulars, repeated calls were made on the militia, it was soon perceived, that many of those whose routine of duty was to be performed, either from the interruption which a short absence would give to their domestic affairs, or from some other cause, were extremely unwilling to take the field; and chose rather to give a small sum of money to a substitute. In a short time more money was given for a month's service in the militia, than was offered to a soldier to engage in the regular service. This practice soon taught those who would otherwise have enlisted, the superior value of their services, when they retained the disposition of themselves; and disinclined them to engage permanently in the army. The longer the war continued, the higher was the price of a substitute, and of consequence, an increased bounty became necessary to induce a man to enlist. Such was the effect of these, and other causes, that by the

the time Congress became convinced of the error which had been committed, the ability to correct it, if not entirely passed away, was certainly very much diminished.

The immense loss of arms, resulting inevitably from their being placed in the hands of troops who were soon to return home, and who could not be subject to discipline while in camp, was also a very serious mischief.

Connected with short enlistments, and with the organization of civil governments in America, were other defects in the structure of the army, which produced no inconsiderable degree of embarrassment. It has been seen, that in the commencement of the war, the troops were raised entirely by the local authorities, who, without concert, established military systems of their own, and appointed officers, whose relative rank, and right of promotion, it was not very easy to adjust. The officers, like the men, were engaged only for one year, and at the expiration of that time, were to be recommissioned. Congress appointed the general officers, and took the armies raised by the respective colonies into continental pay. With considerable difficulty, a new army was formed out of these materials, in the face of the enemy, during the blockade of Boston. This work was to be repeated, with infinitely more difficulty, during the active operations of the campaign of

of 1776. The attention of Congress was very early called to this interesting subject by General Washington; but that body performed its most important duties through the agency of sovereign states. Those states were to nominate the officers, and were requested to send commissioners to camp to attend to this object. So many delays were experienced, that the dissolution of the army approached, before officers were appointed to recruit that which was to take its place. At length Congress resolved that General Washington should himself be empowered to appoint the officers of those states which had failed to depute commissioners for that purpose. The manner in which appointments were made, unfortunately brought into the service, as officers, men without capacity, or sufficient weight of character to preserve the respect of the soldiers, and that discipline which is essential to an army; and the repeated re-organization of the troops gave continual discontent.

The various independent authorities employed in raising the army, gave occasion to other very embarrassing circumstances. In order to complete their quotas, some of the states engaged to allow those who would enlist in their service, additional pay to that promised by Congress. The discontents excited by a disparity of pay among soldiers in the same army, will readily be conceived. The interference

interference of the general with the state governments, to produce a departure from this pernicious plan, became absolutely necessary.

From the same motives, some of the states gave large additional bounties. This, it was supposed by Congress, would effectually destroy the recruiting business in other states where the same liberality was not used, and therefore a resolution was passed, recommending, and insisting on a strict adherence to the precise system which had been proposed by the continental government.

A defect in the structure of the army, which was very seriously felt, was the want of engineers, artillery, and cavalry. During the campaign of 1775 and 1776, there existed but one regiment of artillery, no corps of engineers, and not a single troop of horse. General Lee, who commanded in the southern department, and whose experience of the utility of horse was not now to be acquired, very early pressed the necessity of employing troops of that description, and at his suggestion, a regiment was raised in Virginia, to be commanded by Colonel Bland. The active and extensive operations of 1776, disclosed fully to the commander in chief, the disadvantages to be combated by an army composed almost entirely of infantry. Among the militia of Connecticut were indeed a few cavalry; but the expence attending the maintenance of their horses prevented their being employed

ployed in the first instance, and when they were taken into service, it was soon perceived that better horses than could be furnished by militia men, were indispensable to the duties required from them. Towards the close of that campaign, therefore, he urged on Congress the importance to the service of making these improvements in the organization of the army; and his representations had the influence they merited.

It was determined to increase the corps of artillery to three regiments, the command of which was given to Colonel Knox, now promoted to the rank of a brigadier-general; to take Bland's regiment into continental pay; to raise a body of three thousand cavalry; and to enable General Washington to create a corps of engineers. In this important branch of the military art, the Americans were peculiarly defective. No state of things had heretofore existed which held forth inducements to study this essential part of the science of war. To acquire even a moderate proficiency in it, requires time, application, and experience. The foundation, therefore, of an able corps of engineers must be laid long before the advantages expected from them can be realized. Of consequence, the attention of Congress could not have been directed too soon to this object.

The want of skill and experience in this important department, could not fail to be displayed in the

the defensive works constructed in the first instance by the Americans. Another mischief resulting from the same cause, was a disposition to place too much confidence in their fortifications, and to believe them stronger than they were in reality.

The defect of engineers among the native Americans,* rendered the employment of foreigners, in that important branch of service, indispensably necessary; and when the corps authorized by Congress was formed, it was composed of French and Germans. General De Portaile, an officer of great reputed talents, was placed at its head.

* In the early part of the war, Colonel Putnam, a very valuable officer from New England, appears to have been frequently employed in the capacity of an engineer. It cannot derogate from his merit to say, that it was impossible he could possess the professional skill which that department required.

CHAPTER II.

The American army inoculated for the small-pox—General Heath moves down to Kingsbridge, but does not effect any thing—Skirmishes, and state of American army—Destruction of stores at Peeks-kill—at Danbury—Expedition of Colonel Meigs to Sagg harbour—General Howe moves out to Somerset court-house in great force—Returns to Amboy—Endeavours to cut off the retreat of the American army to Middlebrook, but is disappointed—Lord Cornwallis skirmishes near the Scotch plains with Lord Stirling—The British army embarks.

THE effect at first produced by the proclamation published by Lord and General Howe on taking possession of New Jersey, has been already noticed. The gloomy aspect then worn by the affairs of America, added to the hope of impunity for past offences held forth by this proclamation, produced a general disposition among the people of that state, to avail themselves of the promise it contained. Great numbers acknowledged the royal authority, and nearly the whole of Jersey wore the appearance of a province once

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more within the pale of the British empire. Had the conduct of the British army been such as to cherish the expectation, that security to their persons and property was attainable by submission it is not easy to say what limits could have been set to the anti-american spirit, which had been so extensively manifested. Fortunately it was not. Whatever might be the wish, and the exertions of the general to restrain them, they considered and treated the inhabitants as conquered rebels, rather than as returning friends. No species of licentiousness was unpractised. The plunder and destruction of property was among the least offensive of the injuries sustained. The persons, not only of the men, but of that sex through which injuries least to be forgiven, and longest to be remembered, are received, were exposed to the most irritating outrage. Nor were these excesses confined to those who had been active in the American cause. The lukewarm, and even the loyalists themselves, not less than the friends of independence, were the victims of this indiscriminating spirit of rapine.

The effect of such proceedings among a people, whose country had never before been the seat of war; who were strangers to the ravages of a hostile army; who felt no original attachment to their invaders; but whose nonresistance had been occasioned solely by the hope of that security

to their persons and property, which had been promised as the reward of submission to the royal authority; could not fail to equal the most sanguine hopes of the friends of the revolution. A sense of personal wrongs produced a temper, which national considerations had been found too weak to excite; and when the battles of Trenton and Princeton gave a turn to the operations of the armies, and released the inhabitants from the fears created by the presence of their invaders, the great body of the people flew to arms; and those who could not be brought into the field to check the advance of the enemy, and thereby prevent those ravages which uniformly afflict a country that becomes the seat of war, were prompt in avenging those outrages.

Small bodies of the militia scoured the country in every direction, seized on stragglers who had separated themselves from their corps, in several small skirmishes behaved unexceptionably well, and were collecting in such numbers as to threaten the weaker posts of the enemy with the fate which their troops at Trenton and Princeton had already experienced.

The cautious temper of the British general readily suggested to him the necessity of guarding against that spirit of enterprise which his adversary had disclosed, and of which there was now reason to apprehend he might be furnished with the

the means of giving additional proofs. Sir William Howe therefore determined, as the season was unfavourable for active operations, not to expose himself to further loss by extending his cantonments, but to strengthen himself by contracting his posts. The different positions which had been heretofore taken, for the purpose of covering the country, all except two, were abandoned, and the whole British force in the Jerseys was collected at New Brunswick on the Raritan, and at Amboy, a small town at the mouth of that river. These two posts were judiciously selected for the double purpose of again penetrating into the heart of the country, if he should renew the project of passing by land to Philadelphia, and, in the mean time, of keeping up a safe communication with New York.

Although the strength of the American army did not admit of any important blow before General Howe had thus concentrated his force, that movement was not effected entirely without loss. General Maxwell, with a corps of Jersey militia, had been ordered to the neighbourhood of Elizabeth-town; and on their evacuating that place, had made a successful attack on their rear, in which about seventy prisoners, and a part of their baggage, were taken.

Almost the whole state of Jersey was now restored to the union. The British general, who had lately spread his troops over a very large part

of it, and who, in a great measure, overawed thoſe counties his arms had not reached, was now reduced to the possession of two neighbouring towns, and the communication between them; and could only consider himself as master of the ground he occupied.

The American force had been so diminished by the extreme severity of the service, by the expiration of their engagements, and by the impatience of the militia to return to their homes, that it was with much difficulty, and by great individual efforts, the appearance of an army was kept up. The militia and volunteers came in from Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia. Their numbers were reported to be much greater than they were in reality; and although continually changing, yet, added to the small remaining regular force, they enabled the general, who disposed of them to the greatest advantage, to take different positions near the lines of the enemy, which perpetually harassed them with threatened attacks, restrained their foraging parties, in a great measure covered the country, kept up the spirits of the people at large, and produced no inconsiderable distress in the British camp, by rendering it extremely difficult to obtain supplies of provisions or fuel.

While the enemy was thus surrounded, harassed, and confined, by little more than an imaginary

imaginary army, the parts of which disappeared at the approach of any serious force, but returned to their former positions when that force retreated, and always attacked small parties with great vigour, and often with success; General Washington came to the hazardous, but judicious resolution, of freeing himself and his future army from the fear of a calamity which he found it impossible to elude, and which had been more fatal in his camp, and more dreaded, than the sword of the enemy.

Inoculation had been rarely practised in the western world, and the small-pox had been ever dreaded as a scourge the most tremendous with which the human race could be afflicted. Notwithstanding the efforts incessantly used to guard against this disease, which, taken in the natural way, is so destructive to the human species, it had found its way both into the northern and middle army; and had, to a very alarming degree, impaired the force of both. In the northern army, especially, its havoc had been so extensive that, according to every probability, only the delay requisite to obtain the superiority on lake Champlain, a measure believed to be of absolute necessity, prevented the British army, in 1776, from penetrating to the Hudson.

As the only effectual mode of avoiding a return of the same evils the ensuing campaign, the general

neral determined to inoculate all the soldiers in the American service. With as much secrecy as could be observed, preparations were made to give the infection in camp, and the hospital physicians at Philadelphia were ordered to carry all the southern troops, who were for that purpose stopped in that place and its neighbourhood, as expeditiously as possible through the disease. Similar orders were also given to the physicians at other places; and thus was prepared, for the ensuing campaign, an army exempt from the fear of a calamity which had at all times endangered the most important operations. The process in camp was so conducted, that no advantage of it was taken by the enemy, and the example given in the army was fortunately followed very generally through the country; so that this alarming disease, in a great degree, ceased to be the terror of America.

While Philadelphia was supposed to be in hazard, the militia of New England had been called for, and had been ordered in considerable numbers to the Delaware. Six thousand men under General Lincoln marched from Massachusetts, and a force in proportion to its population was raised in Connecticut. Of these, the greater number were detained by the invasion of Rhode island; but a few regiments marched as far as the North river, to the camp of General Heath, who had

had been left to guard the highlands of New York. Here they were stopped by order of the commander in chief, for the purpose of making a diversion on the side of New York, from which hopes of considerable advantage were entertained.

As the enemy was in great force in Jersey, and had detached a strong corps to Rhode island, New York must necessarily be weak. About two thousand men were understood to be in the neighbourhood of Kingsbridge, and the whole force on the island was not calculated at a much more considerable number. On Long island, it was said, there was only Delancy's brigade of American loyalists, amounting to but little more than one thousand men. It was supposed that the militia of New England and New York would form a respectable army, with which General Heath might alarm, and perhaps more than alarm, that important post. He was directed to march down to the neighbourhood of Kingsbridge, to carry off the forage and fresh provisions with which the enemy might be supplied, and if the prospect of succeeding appeared probable, to attack the forts which guarded the entrance into the island. It was expected that fears for New York might induce the enemy, either to evacuate the Jerseys entirely, in which event they must suffer extremely through the winter for fuel, forage, and provisions; or so to weaken their posts at Brunswick and Amboy,

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as to give General Washington an opportunity of attacking them with some advantage. If he should be disappointed in this expectation, and the enemy in the Jerseys should remain undiminished, he thought it not improbable that some important advantages might be gained on York or Long islands.

In pursuance of this plan, General Heath marched down towards Westchester, and summoned fort Independence to surrender; but the garrison determining to hold the place, it was thought by a council of war unadvisable to risk an assault with only militia; and some intelligence having been received that the army from Rhode island had embarked, and would probably land in their rear, they retreated to the highlands without effecting any thing. A corps of Connecticut militia under General Wooster, and some New York militia under Colonel Rensalaer, were left to collect and bring away the forage and horned cattle, which were in considerable quantities, and would furnish the enemy with supplies they greatly wanted. About the same time, an expedition which had been planned by General Spencer against Rhode island, where the enemy were between three and four thousand strong, was also abandoned. He had proposed landing near Howland's ferry, on a point of land which projects from the island, and is commanded by high grounds

grounds on the opposite shore, where the Americans had erected a battery; but General Washington directed that the attempt should not be made without the strongest probability of success; and as the eastern continental troops were ordered to Ticonderoga, it was thought unsafe to make so hazardous an attempt with only militia. "It is right," said General Washington on this occasion, "not to risk a miscarriage. Until we get our new army properly established, it is our business to play a certain game, and not depend upon militia for any thing capital."

In the mean time, every day almost produced some skirmish, which increased the distress of the enemy, and the confidence of the Americans in themselves. The British found it totally unsafe to forage but with large covering parties, which were often attacked with advantage, and their horses frequently taken. The miserable appearance they made evidenced the scarcity which prevailed in their camp. In these skirmishes prisoners were often made, and repeated small successes, the details of which filled the papers throughout America, served very much to animate the people at large, who even supposed that, so soon as the season would permit the armies to take the field, the British would be driven to their ships for protection. Yet the real situation of General Washington, which was happily concealed, in a great degree,

degree, both from the enemy and from his own countrymen, was extremely critical. He was often abandoned by bodies of the militia before their places were filled by others, and thus left in a state of dangerous weakness, exposed to have his positions forced by the enemy. This was not the only inconvenience resulting from this fluctuating army. They carried off arms and blankets, which had been unavoidably delivered to them, to be used while in camp, and thus wasted in advance the supplies collected for the use of the army now recruiting for the ensuing campaign.

While exposed to these embarrassing inconveniences, the general received intelligence that reinforcements were arriving from Rhode island, and that the movement of General Heath towards Kingsbridge had not produced the effects he had hoped for from that manœuvre. His fears for Philadelphia were again revived, and the New England troops, under the command of General Heath, except so many as might be deemed necessary to guard the highlands, were ordered immediately to join him. Very heavy requisitions were also made on the neighbouring militia, especially of New Jersey. To obviate any objections which might be made in complying with these requisitions, by those who had taken the oaths of allegiance to the king of Great Britain, General Washington had, the latter end of January, issued his proclama-

proclamation, in which he discharged the obligations created by those oaths, and required those who had taken them, to repair to head quarters, or to the quarters of the nearest general officer, and there swear allegiance to the United States; on doing which, a full pardon was granted to them. The beneficial effects of this proclamation were soon felt, and the people flocked in from every quarter to take the oaths; but the legislature of New Jersey could not be prevailed on to pass an act which would bring the militia certainly into the field.

The movement which he had with so much reason apprehended, was not, however, made; and the war of skirmishes on the side of Jersey continued throughout the winter. In the course of it, the British loss was supposed to be more considerable than what they had sustained at Trenton and Princeton, and hopes were entertained, that, from the scarcity of forage, neither their cavalry nor draught horses would be in a condition to take the field to advantage, when the campaign should open.

This petty warfare, though all that could then be attempted, was far short of the hopes which had been entertained by the American general.—His energetic mind submitted with infinite reluctance to the inactivity his weakness imposed on him. He had flattered himself, that the reviving

courage

courage of his countrymen would have placed at his disposal a force which would enable him to beat the enemy in detail during the winter, and to repel the great exertions which it was well understood would be made for the conquest of America in the course of the ensuing summer.

All the intelligence from Europe concurred in demonstrating the fallacy of the hope, still cherished by many, that the war would be abandoned by Great Britain. Never had the administration been supported by greater majorities in parliament, and the body of the nation appeared well disposed to employ all its means to reannex to the empire, by force, what were still deemed revolted colonies.—The importance of destroying or maiming the present army before it could be reinforced, was consequently felt in its full extent; and the commander in chief made the most strenuous endeavours to promote the recruiting service, and to collect the recruits in such numbers as would enable him successfully to attack the enemy, either in Rhode island, New York, or New Jersey. The state sovereignties, where the real energies of government resided, were incessantly urged to take effectual measures to fill their regiments, and to bring their respective quotas early into the field. They were pressed to march their recruits, as soon as their health permitted from the effects of the small-pox, by companies, and even by parts of companies,

companies, to the several stations assigned them; and those general officers, who were supposed to possess most influence, were detached to their respective states, for the purpose of promoting and superintending the recruiting service.

Congress too, at the instance of the commander in chief, passed such resolutions as were calculated to second his views. They authorized him to draw the eastern troops from Peeks-kill, who were to be replaced by New York militia; and required the executive of New Jersey to order out the whole militia of that state, and the executive of Pennsylvania to order such part of their militia as was contiguous to New Jersey, properly armed and equipped, to the aid of the general, "It being," proceed their resolutions, "the earnest desire of Congress to make the army under the immediate command of General Washington sufficiently strong, not only to curb and confine the enemy within their present quarters, and prevent them from drawing support of any kind from the country, but, by the divine blessing, totally to subdue them before they can be reinforced."

These resolves were communicated in a letter, manifesting the sanguine hopes of Congress, that the desire expressed in them would be soon realized; but to do so, required means infinitely greater than those placed in the hands of their general. Many concurring causes prevented the collection

collection of a force competent to operations as vigorous and decisive as the enterprising genius of the commander in chief had planned.

Such were the measures taken by several of the state authorities for appointing the regimental officers of their quotas, that their arrangements were not completed till the spring, and even then, bitter contests concerning rank remained to be adjusted when the troops should join the army. The almost unparalleled sufferings which had been sustained in a service where raw troops, unfurnished with ordinary clothing, had unavoidably been exposed to the hardships of a winter campaign, in the face of a superior army; the many deaths resulting from those hardships, and probably in some degree from an injudicious organization of the hospital department,* which was found to be the tomb of the sick, had excited very extensively a disgust to the service, and produced an unwillingness to engage in it. That en-

* The loss sustained by disease had so greatly surpassed any calculation which could be warranted by former experience, that it was with much reason supposed there must be something vicious in the arrangement of the hospital department. The early attention of Congress was solicited to this interesting subject; but the spring was far advanced before a system more liberal and extensive than had before been adopted, and which promised to be more adequate to its objects, could be completed.

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thusiasm which glowed in so many bosoms in the first moments of the war, which leads to great individual sacrifice for the public good, had almost evaporated; and the difference between the compensation allowed a soldier enlisted for three years, or the war, and that which might be obtained by occasionally becoming a substitute for persons called out to serve in the militia for short terms, became a subject of calculation extremely unfavourable, in its result, to the completion of the regular regiments.

The recruiting service made only slow progress, and, instead of being able to execute the great designs he had meditated, the general entertained the most serious fears that the enemy would take the field during the winter, force his positions, and crossing the Delaware upon the ice, proceed to Philadelphia.

The frequent demands made on the militia in consequence of this weakness of the regular army, were extremely harassing and distressing to the great body of the people. While but little real efficient force was acquired, great additional expence was incurred; and in those states most exposed to these calls, serious apprehensions were entertained for the agriculture of the country.

The real condition of the army during the winter is exhibited in a letter from the commander in chief to Congress, in answer to that which inclosed the

resolutions which have been mentioned, and which expressed the brilliant schemes of victory, in which the government at that time indulged itself. "Could I," said the general, in a letter of the 4th of May, "accomplish the important objects so eagerly wished by Congress; confining the enemy within their present quarters, preventing their getting supplies from the country, and totally subduing them before they are reinforced; I should be happy indeed. But what prospect or hope can there be of my effecting so desirable a work at this time? The enclosed return,* to which I solicit the most

* In a postscript it is stated, that an accurate return could not be obtained; but that from the best estimate he could form, the whole force in Jersey fit for duty was under three thousand, all of whom, except nine hundred and eight-one, were militia, who stood engaged only to the last of that month. The continental troops under inoculation, including their attendants, amounted to about one thousand.

In a letter of the 6th of March to Governor Trumbull, calling on the state of Connecticut for two thousand militia to be marched to Peeks-kill, after complaining of the militia he had called from the southern states, who came and went as their own caprice might direct, he says, "I am persuaded, from the readiness with which you have ever complied with all my demands, that you will exert yourself in forwarding the beforementioned number of men, upon my bare request. But I hope you will be convinced of the necessity of the demand, when I tell you, in confidence, that after the fifteenth of this month, when the time of General Lincoln's militia expires, I shall be left with the remains of five Virginia regiments,

serious attention of Congress, comprehends the whole force I have in Jersey. It is but a handful, and bears no proportion, on the scale of numbers, to that of the enemy. Added to this, the major part is made up of militia. The most sanguine in speculation cannot deem it more than adequate to the least valuable purposes of war."

In pursuance of those cautionary measures, which were suggested by the mortifying weakness of his army, the boats on the Delaware were once more secured, and the public stores deposited in places supposed to be least exposed to the enemy.

The hope that, by a great exertion of heroic patriotism, a sufficient force might be collected,

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ments, not amounting to more than as many hundred men, and parts of two or three other continental battalions, all very weak. The remainder of the army will be composed of small parties of militia from this state and Pennsylvania, on whom little dependence can be put, as they come and go when they please. I have issued peremptory orders to every colonel in the regular service to send in what men he has recruited, even if they amount to but one hundred to a regiment: if they would do this, it would make a considerable force upon the whole. The enemy must be ignorant of our numbers and situation, or they would never suffer us to remain unmolested; and I almost tax myself with imprudence in committing the secret to paper; not that I distrust you, of whose inviolable attachment I have had so many proofs, but for fear the letter, should by any accident fall into other hands than those for which it is intended."

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during the winter, to destroy the British army, and thereby at once terminate the war, being entirely disappointed, the views of the general were almost exclusively directed to the next campaign.

As the troops to constitute the new army were to be raised principally through the agency, and by the authority, of the state governments, and Congress could take no measures to fill up the regiments, other than such as were merely recommendatory, in addition to the bounty offered to those who would voluntarily enlist, the state authorities were resorted to, and different expedients were devised by them to substitute other motives for that zeal for independence which had at first been relied on, but which, it was now feared, would not operate with sufficient force to bring the requisite numbers into the field.

In the New England states, where, in consequence of the influx of money, produced, among other causes, by the sales of prizes, the depreciation of the continental currency began to be most sensibly perceived, the system formerly adopted of giving increased pay to their troops was resumed. But the strong remonstrances urged by General Washington against this measure, induced those states once more to abandon it; yet they persisted in their resolution to encourage the recruiting service by an additional bounty. This, though indeed less pernicious than a partial augmentation

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of pay, was at first opposed, as being calculated to effect in a degree the same mischief. Finding, however, that the bounty offered by Congress was not sufficient inducement to enlist, this voluntary aid of the northern states was assented to; and it would have been, perhaps, a favourable circumstance, had the example been immediately followed throughout the other states.

Even this measure did not produce the effects expected from it. The regiments continued to fill slowly, and it became every day more apparent, that the American army must still be inferior in number to the enemy, unless more energetic measures could be adopted. The critical situation of their affairs, and the necessity of bringing a respectable force into the field, were urged to the different states by General Washington, with all the earnestness to be expected from his situation, and zeal for the service. In Connecticut and Massachussetts, the country was divided into districts, each of which was called on for its man, and in default of producing, by a given day, a soldier enlisted for three years, or for the war, it was directed that one person from those capable of bearing arms should be draughted to serve till the first of the next ensuing January. This measure received the approbation of the commander in chief, who, though he deprecated any reliance on men whose terms of service were to be of less du-

ration than that for which the whole army was to be raised, yet submitted to this, as perhaps the most eligible expedient of which the existing state of things would permit the adoption.

In Virginia, where the same difficulty attended enlistments, it was proposed by the executive to fill the regiments with volunteers, who should engage to serve for six months. This plan was submitted to General Washington by Governor Henry, and his opinion asked concerning its adoption. "I am under the necessity of observing," said the general in reply, "that the volunteer plan which you mentioned will never answer any valuable purpose, and that I cannot but disapprove the measure. To the short engagements of our troops may be fairly and justly ascribed almost every misfortune that we have experienced."

In a subsequent letter to the same gentleman, the necessity of bringing a sufficient army into the field, should even coercive measures be resorted to, was very strongly enforced. At the same time some alternatives were suggested, which, in a later period of the war, constituted the basis of various experiments to furnish the quota of troops required from that state.

As the usual season for active operations approached, and the solicitude of the commander in chief to assemble his army increased, fresh difficulties, growing necessarily out of the organization

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of the American system, unfolded themselves. As every state was exposed to hostile invasion, and the enemy, by means of their fleet, in perfect possession of the sea, could transfer the war at pleasure to any part of the union, the attention of the states was principally directed each to its particular situation. Each state in the neighbourhood of the great theatre of the war, contemplated its own danger, and claimed a portion of the protection due from the whole to its parts. The spirit incident to every league, although the object of the confederation was perfectly the same with that pursued by each of its members, could not be totally inoperative in an empire, where, notwithstanding the existence of a head, the essentials of government resided in the members. It was displayed in an effort to give to the energies of the army such various directions as would have left it totally unable to effect any great object, or to obstruct any one plan the enemy might have formed. The patriotism of the day, however, and the unexampled confidence placed by the state authorities in the commander in chief, prevented the mischiefs this spirit was so well calculated to generate. He represented to the governors in strong terms the immense advantages which the possession either of Philadelphia or the highlands on the Hudson, would probably give to the enemy; and the powerful reasons for the opinion, that one or

both of these great objects would be attempted the next campaign. That the continental army, when collected in its utmost force, would be scarcely competent to a defence of these important points; and, if weakened by detachments to cover every place exposed to the sudden and predatory incursions of the enemy, would be totally unable to effect any of the great purposes essential to the maintenance of the war. That although the British might harass the coasts, and injure the maritime towns, by their shipping, and by sudden debarkations of small bodies of troops, it was not probable that their general would attempt, at one and the same time, to make a permanent acquisition of various parts of the continent; since such a division of his force would probably defeat all his objects. It was indeed to be wished, but not expected, that this mode of carrying on the war might be adopted. To protect the coast against an enemy entirely in possession of the sea, was impracticable; and though the mischief resulting from these predatory expeditions might be considerable, yet they were expected when resistance was determined on, and could have no influence on the war, which was the great and common cause of all America. But if, by detaching parts of the army with the vain hope of giving security to places it was really impossible to secure, the main body should be so enfeebled as to permit the enemy

enemy to take possession of the strong grounds on the Hudson, both the upper and lower communication between the eastern and southern parts of the continent would be cut off, and the enemy would open to themselves a free intercourse between New York and the lakes.

These representations made their proper impressions on the sovereignties now united, by a sense of common danger, in a war, on the event of which the all of each was staked; and the intention of retaining continental regiments for local defence was abandoned, though with some reluctance. The burden, however, of calling militia from their domestic avocations, at every threat of invasion, and of watching the different stations of the enemy, with men whose principal pursuit was the cultivation of the soil, began to be so intolerable, that the people cast about for other expedients to relieve themselves from its weight. The plan of raising regular corps, to be exclusively under state authority, to serve in the state only, and thus be a perpetual substitute for the yeomanry of the country, presented itself as the most effectual mode of protecting the coast from the insults of small bodies of the enemy, without too much interrupting domestic œconomy by perpetually harassing the husbandman, and calling him from his plough.

Against this plan also, General Washington felt the

the necessity of remonstrating. While the regiments in the service of the United States were unfilled, it was apparent that its tendency must be to impede the progress of their completion; and he deemed all measures of partial defence impolitic, which served to diminish the common strength. All his influence could only suspend a measure, of the mischievous consequences of which he entertained such serious fears: and after the new regiments had been ordered to take the field, though they were far from being full, the inconvenience of relying on militia only for security against even sudden invasion, was so strongly felt, that the states generally resolved to raise particular corps of regular troops for individual defence.

As the spring began to open, and the season for more active operations to approach, the first attentions of General Howe were directed to the destruction of the scanty resources prepared by the Americans for the ensuing campaign.

During the winter, magazines of provisions and other stores had been laid up in the highlands, as a place of security, from whence the garrisons, and other troops stationed on the Hudson, might draw their supplies. About fifty miles above New York, on the river, was a small unimportant place called Peeks-kill, which had served as a kind of post, where mills had been erected, and where a small body of troops were generally stationed.

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This was usually the residence of the officer commanding in the highlands. It was a place intended for the reception of stores, from whence they were distributed into the neighbouring posts, as occasion might require. From this post also parties were occasionally detached towards New York to forage, and to cover the country. General Heath had commanded at it, but having been directed to succeed General Ward at Boston, who had resigned his commission, the command had devolved on General Macdougal.

The strength of this post, like that of all others depending for defence on militia, was subject to great fluctuation. At some times it had amounted to three or four thousand men, and at other times it was reduced to as many hundreds. General Howe had understood it to be a much more considerable depôt of stores than it really was, and as soon as the ice was out of the river, took advantage of the occasional weakness of Macdougal, to plan an expedition against it, for the purpose of either destroying, or bringing away, the stores there deposited.

On the 23d of March, Colonel Bird was detached up the river on this service, with about five hundred men, under convoy of a frigate and some armed vessels. General Macdougal, whose numbers did not, at that time, exceed two hundred and fifty men, received timely notice of his approach,

proach, and exerted himself for the removal of the stores into the strong country in his rear. Before this could be effected, the enemy appeared; and, finding himself unable to oppose them, he set fire to the remaining magazines, and to the barracks, and retired about two miles into the strong grounds on the back of Peeks-kill. The conflagration was completed by the enemy, who then returned to New York. During their short stay a piquet guard was attacked by Colonel Willet, and driven in with the loss of a few men; a circumstance believed by General Macdougal to have hastened the re-embarkation of the detachment. The quantity of stores in the magazines was not so considerable as had been expected, and, of consequence, the injury done in this expedition was much less than had been counted on by the British general, when he directed it. A reinforcement of about two thousand militia had been ordered from Connecticut; and, not long after the destruction of Peeks-kill, about half that number actually arrived.

At Danbury, on the western frontier of Connecticut, not far from the highlands of New York, military stores to a considerable amount had likewise been deposited. Although this place was not more than twenty miles from the Sound, yet the intervening country was so rough, the troops from the eastward were so frequently passing through the

the town, and the zeal of the neighbouring militia so much relied on, that the magazines collected at it were believed to be secure against any sudden attack from the enemy. In addition to the means of defence which have been stated, General Washington had ordered as many of the draughts made by the state of Connecticut, to fill up their continental regiments, as the place was capable of accommodating, to be assembled there, for the double purpose of being inoculated, and of furnishing a guard to the stores; but, under this order, only fifty men had been collected. Against Danbury, however, an expedition was projected, and two thousand men, under the command of Governor Tryon, major-general of the provincials in the British service, assisted by brigadiers Agnew and Sir William Erskine, were employed in it.

On the 25th of April, the fleet appeared off the coast of Connecticut, and in the evening, landed the troops without opposition, at Campo, between Fairfield and Norwalk. General Silliman, who was then in that part of the country, immediately dispatched expresses to alarm, and call out the militia. In the mean time, the enemy proceeded, almost undisturbed, to Danbury, which they reached about ten o'clock next day; and which place, with the magazines it contained, they set on fire and destroyed. Colonel Huntingdon, who had occupied the town with one hundred and fifty militia,

militia and continental troops, retired, on their approach, to a neighbouring height, where he waited the reinforcements which were assembling from the country. General Arnold was also in the neighbourhood, superintending the recruiting service. He joined General Silliman at Reading, where that officer had collected about five hundred militia. General Wooster, who had resigned his commission in the continental service, and been appointed major-general of the militia of Connecticut, fell in with them at the same place; and they proceeded that night through a heavy rain to Bethel, about eight miles from Danbury. Here they halted, and having heard next morning that the enemy, after destroying the town and magazines, were returning, they divided their troops, and General Wooster with about three hundred men fell in their rear, while Arnold, with about five hundred, crossing the country, took post in their front at Ridgefield. Wooster came up with them about eleven in the morning, attacked their rear with great gallantry, and a sharp skirmish ensued, in which he was mortally wounded, and his troops compelled to give way.* The enemy then proceeded to Ridgefield, where they found Arnold, who had only arrived about an hour before them, already entrenched on a strong piece of ground,

* Congress voted a monument to his memory, and

and prepared to dispute their passage. A warm skirmish ensued, which continued nearly an hour, when Arnold was compelled to give way, and being unable to rally his men, retreated to Pangatuck, about three miles east of Norwalk. The enemy remained that night at Ridgefield, which they also set on fire, and by break of day, next morning, resumed their march. They were met about eleven in the morning by Arnold, whose numbers increased during the day to something more than one thousand men, among whom were some continental artillery and infantry; and a continual skirmishing was kept up till five in the afternoon, when the enemy reached a hill near their ships, where they made a stand. Here the Americans charged them with intrepidity, but were repulsed and broken. Availing themselves of this circumstance, the enemy immediately re-embarked, and returned to New York.

The day before this detachment landed at Campo, twelve square rigged vessels with some troops on board, sailed up the Hudson, and anchored above Dobb's ferry, where they were supposed to be stopped by a strong north wind, during which it was impossible for them to get further up the river. While this wind continued to blow, General Macdougal received intelligence of the advance of Governor Tryon on Danbury, and, in the hope of intercepting him on his retreat, while he should be

be pressed by the Connecticut militia, set out on the night of the 27th from Peeks-kill, with about twelve hundred men, and marching all night, reached Bedford, a town not far from the road leading from Ridgefield to Norwalk, next morning about ten o'clock. There he was informed of the hasty retreat of General Tryon, and despairing of overtaking him, returned to Peeks-kill, which place he thought too important to hazard by a long absence, at too great a distance from it. Had he arrived before Ridgefield was abandoned, the situation of the enemy would certainly have been rendered extremely critical. Notwithstanding the very decided inferiority of force opposed to them, the skirmishes were repeated with so much vivacity, that when they reached their ships, their ammunition, of which they had received sixty rounds per man, is understood to have been entirely exhausted, and the men to have been rendered, by extreme fatigue, almost unfit for further action.

The killed, wounded, and missing of the enemy, amounted to about one hundred and seventy men. The loss of the Americans was represented by the British general, to have been much more considerable. By themselves, it was not admitted to exceed one hundred. In this number, however, were comprehended General Wooster, Lieutenant-colonel Gould, and another field officer killed, and

Colonel

Colonel Lamb wounded. Several other officers and volunteers were killed; and this circumstance, which was occasioned by the peculiar degree of danger to which the brave are exposed while commanding undisciplined troops, might have produced in the enemy an opinion, that the American loss was much greater than was in reality sustained. At the same time, it is to be recollected, that the action having been principally sustained by militia, suddenly collected, and suddenly dispersed, the accounts given of their loss may not be accurate.

In the magazines destroyed at Danbury, were military and hospital stores to a considerable amount, which were greatly needed by the army; but the loss most severely felt was, upwards of one thousand tents, which had been provided for the campaign now about to open. The material of which this important article is made, was so very scarce in the United States, as not to be attainable, on any terms, in sufficient quantity to replace those which were lost on this occasion. Yet, it may well be doubted, whether much was gained by the expedition. The destruction of the houses at Danbury and Ridgefield, served to increase the public irritation; the opposition experienced in a country totally unprepared for their reception, of whose militia a considerable part had been detached to the aid of a neighbouring state; and the celerity

with which a body of two thousand men found it necessary to re-embark on board their ships, after having penetrated only twenty miles into the country; gave strong and public evidence of the difficulty which would attend an attempt to hold the main land of New England. One object of the expedition is understood to have been, to countenance the friends of the former government in that part of the state adjoining New York, and to give them a safe opportunity of assembling round the royal standard. So far as this hope was entertained, it was completely disappointed. No recruits were obtained, and such as might have been inclined to favour their cause, instead of deriving confidence from the expedition, were rather discouraged from declaring themselves openly, by the precipitate manner in which this strong detachment had been compelled to retreat. In a letter to Governor Trumbull on this subject, General Washington, after expressing his regret for the loss which had been sustained, very justly remarked, "that from these events, we derive the consolation of knowing, that the sentiments of the people are still powerfully directed to liberty; and that no impression of the enemy, be it ever so sudden and unexpected, will pass with impunity." This enterprise was, not long afterwards, successfully retaliated. The enemy had been, for some time employed in collecting forage and provisions

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on the eastern end of Long island. This country was supposed to be so completely secured by their armed vessels, which perpetually traversed the Sound, that the protection of the stores, deposited at a small port called Sagg Harbour, for transportation to New York, was confided to a schooner with twelve guns, and a company of infantry.

General Parsons, who commanded a few of the Connecticut recruits at Newhaven, a place of rendezvous from whence they were to be marched to Peeks-kill, conceiving it to be very practicable to elude the cruisers of the enemy, and to surprise this small party, and some other posts not very remote from it, entrusted the execution of his plan to Lieutenant-colonel Meigs, a very gallant officer, who had accompanied Arnold in his memorable march to Quebec, and had been taken prisoner in the unsuccessful attempt made on that place by Montgomery. He embarked with about two hundred and thirty men, on board thirteen whale boats, and proceeded along the coast to Guilford, from whence he was to cross the Sound. Here he was detained for some time by high winds, and a rough sea; but on the 23d of May, about one in the afternoon, he re-embarked one hundred and seventy of his detachment, and proceeded, under convoy of two armed sloops, across the Sound, to the north division of the island, near Southold. The east end of Long island is deeply intersected by

a bay, on the north side of which had been a small foraging party, against which the expedition was in part directed, but they had marched to New York two days before. Here, however, information was received, that the stores had not yet been removed from Sagg harbour, which lies in the northern division of the island, and that the small guard still remained for their defence. The boats were immediately conveyed across the land, a distance of about fifteen miles, into the bay, where the troops re-embarked, and crossing the bay, landed about four miles from Sagg harbour, at two o'clock in the morning, which place they completely surprised and carried with the bayonet. At the same time, a division of the detachment secured the armed schooner, and the vessels with the forage which had been collected for the supply of the army at New York. These were set on fire, and entirely consumed. Six of the enemy were killed, and ninety of them taken prisoners. A very few escaped under cover of the night.

Having thus completely effected the object of his expedition, without the loss of a single man, Colonel Meigs returned to Guilford with his prisoners; "having," as was stated in the letter of General Parsons, giving an account of the enterprise, "moved with such uncommon celerity, as to have transported his men, by land and water, ninety miles in twenty-five hours." As a mark of their

their approbation of his conduct, Congress directed a sword to be presented to him, and passed a resolution expressive of the high sense entertained of his merit, and of the prudence, activity, and valour, displayed by him and his party, in this expedition.

The solicitude of the state governments, to retain within their respective limits, and for partial objects, a part of the force raised for the general defence, was not the only interference with the plan formed by the commander in chief for the conduct of the ensuing campaign.

Congress feeling a particular apprehension for Philadelphia, resolved, "that a camp be immediately formed on the western side of the Delaware, to which the continental troops in Philadelphia, and on their march from the southward and westward, should be ordered to repair with all expedition."

"That it be recommended to the supreme executive council of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to put not less than three thousand of the militia of that state in readiness to march to the camp before mentioned, on the shortest notice."

These resolutions however were accompanied with an order, "that General Washington be immediately informed by express of the resolves agreed on; and that he be informed, that Congress mean not by forming a camp on the west

of Delaware to delay the continental troops, or to prevent their joining the army under his command, as fast as he shall think proper to order them."

The judgment of the commander in chief was completely made up respecting the disposition of his army when it should first take the field. He was entirely convinced that, while General Burgoyne would either endeavour to take Ticonderoga, and to penetrate from thence through the country to the Hudson, or would join the grand army at New York by sea, General Howe would either endeavour, by moving up that river, to possess himself of the forts and high grounds at present occupied by the Americans, or would attempt Philadelphia. That the one or the other plan of operations would be adopted, he did not doubt; but he possessed no means of deciding which would be the first object of the campaign. He had, therefore, determined to take post on the high grounds in Jersey, something to the north of the road leading through Brunswick to Philadelphia. This position was recommended by many considerations. It afforded to Philadelphia the same protection which could have been given by his army on the west side of the Delaware, while it covered great part of the state of Jersey; and possessed this additional advantage, that he might with great facility move from thence to

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the highlands on the Hudson,* should the operations of the enemy take that direction. This being his decided opinion, and his army being too weak to admit of division, he requested that the camp on the west of the Delaware, if formed, should be composed entirely of militia, and that the continental troops should be pressed forward with the utmost possible dispatch, to join him in the Jerseys.

That the events of the next campaign would be of great, perhaps of decisive importance to the issue of the war, and the independence of the country, had been long expected by the commander in chief, who had used through the winter every effort to prepare the means of giving it a favourable termination. Congress and the state governments had been pressed with the most anxious solicitude on the subject of raising men. Though his early hopes respecting the number of regular troops which would compose his army had been cruelly disappointed, and he not only found himself in a situation by no means adapted to carry into effect the active and offensive system of operations he had meditated, but scarcely capable of

* Generals Greene and Knox had been directed, soon after the troops were placed in winter quarters, to view all the posts commanding the passes through the highlands on the Hudson, in order to the adoption of a more improved system for their defence.

maintaining defensive war, he still preserved that steady and persevering courage which had supported himself and the American cause through the gloomy scenes of the preceding year, and that solid judgment which applies to the best advantage those means which are attainable, however inadequate they may be.

In the uncertainty with which the first movements of the enemy were yet enveloped, and the equal necessity of defending the three great points, Ticonderoga, the highlands of New York, and Philadelphia, against two powerful armies so much superior to him in arms, in numbers, and in discipline, it was necessary to make such an arrangement of his force as would, so far as was practicable, enable the parts reciprocally to aid each other, without neglecting objects of great and almost equal magnitude, which were alike threatened, and which were far asunder. To effect this, if possible, the northern troops, including those of New York, were divided between Ticonderoga and Peeks-kill, while those from Jersey to the south, including North Carolina, were directed to assemble in Jersey, where a camp was to be formed on the high and strong grounds near the Raritan. The more southern troops were not drawn from that weak quarter of the union, but remained for its protection. If the army of Canada should join that of New York by sea, the troops

troops at Peeks-kill, and those in Jersey, could very readily be united, for the defence either of the highlands or of Philadelphia. If Burgoyne should attempt Ticonderoga by the way of the lakes, with a view of penetrating from thence to Albany, and thus obtaining the command of the Hudson, the force at Peeks-kill was posted in such a manner as to furnish detachments to aid the American northern army.

These arrangements being made, and the recruits, who had all been carried through the small-pox, being collected, the camp at Morristown was broken up, the small detachments called in, and the army assembled at Middlebrook, just behind a connected ridge of strong and commanding heights, not far from the Raritan, north of the road leading to Philadelphia, and about ten miles from Brunswick. To this place General Washington repaired in person, on the 28th of May.

This camp, naturally very defensible from the extreme difficulty with which it could be approached, was rendered still more so by intrenchments, and various works thrown up at different places, which appeared to be most accessible. The heights in front of the camp commanded a prospect of the course of the Raritan, the road to Philadelphia, the hills about Brunswick, and a considerable part of the country between that

place

place and Amboy, so as to afford a full view of the most interesting movements of the enemy.

The force brought into the field by America required all the aid which could be derived from a choice of strong positions, and from the most unremitting vigilance. It appears from a return made on the 21st of May, that the total of the army in Jersey, exclusive of the cavalry and artillery, then amounted to only eight thousand three hundred and seventy-eight men, of whom upwards of two thousand were sick. The effective rank and file were only five thousand seven hundred and thirty-eight. In this return the troops of North Carolina were not included, as they had not then joined the army, and the militia of New Jersey, amounting to about five hundred men, were also omitted.

Had this army been composed of the best disciplined troops, its inferiority in point of numbers must have limited its operations to defensive war, and have rendered it entirely incompetent to the protection of any place, which could only be defended by a battle in the open field. But more than half the troops* were unacquainted with

* The extreme severity of the service, aided perhaps by the state of the hospital, had carried to the grave more than two-thirds of the soldiers who had served the preceding campaign, and been engaged for more than one year.

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the first rudiments of military duty, and had never yet looked an enemy in the face. An additional cause for diminishing the confidence otherwise to have been placed in them was, that many of the soldiers, especially from the middle states, were foreigners, many of them servants, on whose attachment to the American cause it was not safe entirely to rely. To avail himself of this unfavourable circumstance, General Howe had offered a large reward to every soldier who would desert, and had promised additional compensation to those who would bring their arms with them. The effect of those promises had been seriously felt, and their future operation, especially among the servants who had been recruited, was greatly dreaded. To diminish this operation, and to allure in turn, from the service of the enemy, those misguided Americans who had engaged with them, but might now wish to be again received into the bosom of their country, General Washington had urged on Congress the policy of allowing all the advantages of freemen to the servants who had enlisted, and of giving full pardons to all Americans who would quit the service of the enemy. These recommendations, like almost every other proceeding from the same source, received the ready attention of Congress, and resolutions were passed in conformity with them.

It was by no means an unimportant part of the

the plan of the campaign, as a movement by land towards Philadelphia was thought probable, to constitute on the western bank of the Delaware, an army of militia, strengthened by a few continental troops, under an experienced officer, to defend in front the passage of that river. Arnold was then in Philadelphia, employed in settling his accounts, and this service was entrusted to him.

General Sullivan also lay at Princeton, with a body of continental troops, increasing in number by the recruits arriving from the southward, and with some Jersey militia. He had been directed to hold himself in perpetual expectation of the enemy, to send his baggage and provisions to places less exposed, and to be in readiness to remove at any instant to a place of greater security, where his left could not be so readily turned, and from whence he might harass the flanks of the enemy on a march, and preserve a communication with the army at Middlebrook. He was directed by no means to risk a general action of his whole detachment, but to act entirely as a partisan corps, and on the first movement of the enemy to place his main body in security, and to harass them with parties detached for that purpose. Measures were also taken to put the militia of Jersey in readiness to take the field so soon as offensive operations should commence. It was intended, not that they should remain embodied for the purpose of strengthening and acting with the

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continental army; but that ranging the country in small parties, they should hang upon, and harass the flanks of the enemy.

The first and real object of the campaign on the part of General Howe, was the acquisition of Philadelphia. It had been proposed to renew the plan which had been partly executed the last year, of marching through Jersey, and after securing the submission of that state, crossing the Delaware on a portable bridge constructed in the winter for the purpose, and proceeding by land to that city. It was supposed, that if, in the execution of this plan, the Americans could be brought to a general action on equal ground, the royal army possessed advantages which must ensure a victory; but that if Washington, declining an engagement, should again be pressed before them over the Delaware, their object would be certainly obtained.

Had the enemy taken the field at the first opening of the season, before the continental troops were assembled, it is probable that this plan might have been executed without any serious obstruction; but the tents and camp equipage expected from Europe not arriving till about the last of May, General Washington had, by the most indefatigable exertions, collected his army and taken possession of, and in some degree fortified, the very advantageous post of the heights

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of Middlebrook, before the British army was in motion. On ground so advantageous as this, it would be dangerous to attack him; for although his camp might be forced, yet victory would most probably be attended with such loss, as to have the consequences of a defeat, and totally disable the victor from reaping its fruits.

If it was deemed too hazardous to attack the strong camp occupied by General Washington at Middlebrook, it was an experiment not less dangerous to attempt to cross the Delaware, to dispute the passage of which an army was collecting on its western bank, while that under the command of General Washington remained unbroken in his rear. It comported, therefore, with the cautious temper of Sir William Howe, to devise some other plan of operation, to be resorted to in the event of being unable to draw the American general from his present advantageous position.

The two great bays of Delaware and Chesapeak, which run deep into the country, and into which the whole fleet could be securely brought, so as to co-operate in a great degree with the land forces, which might be safely transported within a few days march of Philadelphia, and landed at a place from whence their march would be obstructed by no rivers, and only opposed by the American army on equal ground, readily suggested the alternative of proceeding by water, should

should he be unable to manœuvre General Washington out of his present encampment.

Having settled the plan of the campaign, and received some small reinforcements with the necessary camp equipage from Europe, such of the troops still remaining in New York as were designed for active service, began about the beginning of June to pass over into Jersey, and were soon followed by General Howe in person, who, having left a guard for the defence of Amboy, assembled his army at Brunswick, and gave strong indications of an intention to penetrate through the country to the Delaware, and thus reach Philadelphia by land. He brought with him a number of waggons and flat-bottomed boats, supposed to be intended for the passage of that river.

Persuaded from these appearances that an expedition up the Hudson could not be at present contemplated, and believing himself too weak either to act against the enemy, or to defend his own camp, General Washington ordered to his immediate aid the continental troops assembled at Peekskill, except one thousand effectives, who, with the assistance of the militia, were deemed adequate to the protection of the passes in the highlands from any force which could now be brought to act against them.

In the mean time, a select corps of riflemen was formed under the command of Colonel Morgan, an

an officer who had greatly distinguished himself in the unfortunate attempt to storm Quebec. To great personal courage, he added all that watchfulness, that indefatigable exertion, and the happy mixture of caution and enterprise, so peculiarly requisite in the formation of a character intrusted with the command of a partisan corps, designed to act on the lines of a formidable enemy.

He was ordered to take post at Vanvighton's bridge on the Raritan, just above its confluence with the Millstone river, and watch, with very small scouting parties, the left flank of the British army. His attention was particularly directed to the roads leading from Brunswick towards Millstone, Princeton, and the country generally, through which it would be necessary to pass, either to go to Philadelphia, to turn the right wing of the army at Middlebrook, or to make any attempt on General Sullivan. On any movement of the enemy, he was instructed to seize every opportunity to fall on their flank, and to gall them as much as possible; but to take especial care never to permit himself to be surrounded, or to have his retreat to the army cut off.

General Sullivan also was ordered to change his position, and to occupy the high grounds of Rocky-hill, as a place of greater security.

Early in the morning of the 14th, the British army, leaving two thousand men under the command

mand of General Matthews at Brunswick, advanced in two columns towards the Delaware. The front of the first, under Lord Cornwallis, reached Somerset court-house, nine miles from Brunswick, by the appearance of day; and the second, under the command of General de Heister, about the same time, reached Middlebush, which lies between Somerset court-house and Brunswick, on a road to the east of that taken by Lord Cornwallis.

This movement is stated by Sir William Howe to have been made with a view of inducing General Washington to quit his fortified camp at Middlebrook, and approach the Delaware, in which event, he expected to bring on a general engagement, on ground less disadvantageous than that now occupied by the American army. That officer, however, was too well acquainted with the importance of his present position to abandon it, and throw away the advantages it gave him. On the first intelligence that the enemy was in motion, he drew out his whole army, which he posted to great advantage, in order of battle, on the heights in front of his camp. This position was constantly maintained. The troops remained in order of battle during the day, and in the night, they slept on the ground that was to be defended. In the mean time, the militia of Jesey, with an alacrity heretofore unexampled in that state, obeyed the

orders given them, and took the field in great numbers. They principally joined General Sullivan, who had retired behind the Sourland hills towards Fleming town, where an army of some respectability was forming, which could readily rejoin, or otherwise co-operate with, that under the more immediate inspection of the commander in chief.

The settled purpose of General Washington was to defend his camp, but not to hazard a general action on other ground, by advancing from the heights he occupied into the open country, either towards the enemy, or the Delaware. Had his numbers even warranted offensive operations, General Howe had taken a position by no means assailable. His right and front were covered by the Raritan, and his left by the Millstone river. That officer seems not to have had it in contemplation to tempt the American general to attack him, by exposing any part of the British army; but to act on his anxiety for Philadelphia; and thereby induce him to quit the strong ground about Middlebrook, for a position nearer the Delaware, in order to defend the passage of that river. After succeeding in this, he had little doubt of being able to bring on an engagement, in which he counted with great certainty on victory. The motives, however, which had decided General Howe not to attempt a march through Jersey, leaving the American

can army in full force in his rear, had determined General Washington to allow him to proceed to the Delaware, if such should be his intention, throwing in his way only those impediments which might harass and delay his march; but maintaining, with the principal body of his army, the high and secure grounds north of the road to be taken by the enemy, till an opportunity should be given him of striking with manifest advantage some important blow.

He was not long, however, in penetrating the designs of his adversary. He soon perceived the intention of his present movement. "The views of the enemy," he wrote in a letter of the 17th to General Arnold, "must be to destroy this army, and get possession of Philadelphia. I am, however, clearly of opinion that they will not move that way, till they have endeavoured to give a severe blow to this army. The risk would be too great to attempt to cross a river, when they must expect to meet a formidable opposition in front, and would have such a force as ours in their rear. They might possibly be successful, but the probability would be infinitely against them. Should they be imprudent enough to make the attempt, I shall keep close upon their heels, and will do every thing in my power to make the project fatal to them.

"But besides the argument in favour of their

intending, in the first place, a stroke at this army, drawn from the policy of the measure, every appearance contributes to confirm the opinion. Had their design been for the Delaware in the first instance, they would probably have made a secret, rapid march for it, and not have halted so as to awaken our attention, and give us time to prepare for obstructing them. Instead of that, they have only advanced to a position necessary to facilitate an attack on our right, the part in which we are most exposed. In addition to this circumstance, they have come out as light as possible, leaving all their baggage, provisions, boats, and bridges, at Brunswick. This plainly contradicts the idea of their intending to push for the Delaware."

Having formed this opinion of the designs of the enemy, the plan of General Washington was to collect at Middlebrook all the force which could properly be drawn from other quarters, so as to reduce the security of his army, in its present position, to the greatest possible certainty; and to be in a condition to embrace any fair opportunity which might offer, to make an advantageous attack. In the mean time, with his rifle corps, and with light bodies of militia, countenanced by a few continental troops, he proposed to harass them, and weaken their numbers by continual skirmishes. He had, on their first collecting in force

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at Brunswick, ordered strong detachments of continentals from Peeks-kill, of whom only two brigades, one under General Parsons, and another under General Varnum, had as yet arrived; and, in further execution of his present plan, he now directed a part of the troops under General Sullivan to reinforce his right, which he continued to fortify, and the residue to maintain their station about the Sourland hills, with orders to endeavour, in the event of a movement against him by the enemy, to join the main army; or if that should be impracticable, to fall briskly on their flank or rear.

Finding that the American army could not be drawn from a position in which he deemed it unsafe to attack them, and probably influenced in some degree by the temper now manifested by the militia, General Howe determined to waste no more time in threatening Philadelphia by land, but to withdraw his army from Jersey, and, in pursuit of the principal object of the campaign, embark them as expeditiously as possible for the Chesapeak or the Delaware. On the 19th, in the night, leaving the works which had been commenced, half-finished, he returned to Brunswick, and, on the 22d, to Amboy, where he threw over the channel, which separates the continent from Staten island, the bridge designed for the Delaware, and passed over the heavy baggage, and a few of

his troops, to that island, from whence the embarkation of his army was to be made.

This retreat was conducted with some marks of precipitation, and many of the farm houses on the route are said to have been burnt.

From his own observations, and the intelligence he received, General Washington had expected the movement from Brunswick, and had made dispositions to derive some advantages from it. He had detached General Greene with three brigades, for the purpose of falling on and annoying the British rear. General Sullivan was also directed to move with his division from the Sourland hills, and to co-operate with Greene. General Maxwell was ordered to fall on the flank of the enemy, on their march to Amboy. In the mean time, the main army paraded on the heights of Middlebrook, ready to act as circumstances might require.

About sunrise, Colonel Morgan, in pursuance of his orders, attacked and drove in a piquet guard, on which the enemy threw themselves into some redoubts, which, on the approach of Wayne and Morgan, they evacuated; immediately after which, they commenced their march to Amboy. Some sharp skirmishing took place between this party and Morgan's regiment; in which the latter acted to the entire satisfaction of their general; but the hope of gaining any important advantage was entirely disappointed. Sullivan was unable, from

from his distance, and the late hour at which he received his orders, to come up in time; the express sent to General Maxwell, either deserted to the enemy, or was taken; and the rear division of the British being stronger than was expected, the force on the lines could make no impression on it; and the retreat to Amboy was effected without any considerable loss.

In order to cover his light parties which were on the lines of the enemy, and for the purpose of doing them some injury on their retreat to Staten island, General Washington now moved from his strong camp at Middlebrook to Quibbletown, which lies six or seven miles from thence on the road to Amboy. Lord Stirling's division was advanced a few miles still lower, and nearer the enemy, to the neighbourhood of Metuckin meeting-house, in order to act with the parties which were on the lines, should the retreat from Amboy offer the means of injuring their rear.

In this state of things it appeared practicable to General Howe to bring on engagement. With this view, and probably in the hope of turning the left of the American army, and gaining the heights behind them, he recalled, on the night of the 25th, the troops which had passed over to Staten island, and very early next morning the army made a rapid movement in two columns towards Westfield. The right, under the com-

mand of Lord Cornwallis, took the route by Woodbridge to the Scotch plains, and the left, accompanied by Sir William Howe in person, marched by Metuckin meeting-house, to join the rear of the right column, in the road from thence to the Scotch plains. It was intended that the left should have taken a separate route about two miles after their junction with the other column, in order to have attacked the left flank of the American army at Quibbletown, while Lord Cornwallis should gain the heights on the left of the camp at Middlebrook. Four battalions, with six pieces of cannon, were detached to take post at Bonhamtown.*

About Woodbridge, the right column of the enemy fell in with one of the light parties detached to watch their motions; and notice being thus received of this movement, General Washington immediately penetrated its object, and discerned his danger. The whole army was instantly put in motion. It regained, with the utmost celerity, the camp at Middlebrook, and took possession of the heights on the left, which it was supposed the enemy had designed to seize. Lord Cornwallis, on his route, fell in with Lord Stirling, and a smart skirmish ensued, in which the latter was driven from his ground, with the loss of three

* Letter of General Howe.

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field-pieces, and a few men. From thence he retreated to the hills about the Scotch plains, and was pursued as far as Westfield. Here the column under Lord Cornwallis halted; and perceiving the passes in the mountains on the left of the American camp to be guarded, and, of consequence, that the object for which this skilful manœuvre had been made was unattainable, he returned through Raway to Amboy, and the whole army crossed over to Staten island, from whence the embarkation for the Delaware or Chesapeak was to take place.

While retiring from Westfield, the British army was watched by the brigades of Scott and Conway, the former of whom entered Amboy immediately after that place had been evacuated by the enemy; but no opportunity was given during the retreat, of attacking them to any advantage.

So soon as the intention of evacuating the Jerseys had been indicated, General Washington countermanded the orders which had been given to the continental troops at Peek's-kill. Two brigades, which had proceeded as far as Pompton plains to join him, now returned to their former station, with directions to hold themselves in readiness to move on the shortest notice. His doubts concerning the object of the enemy were renewed. That they contemplated some expedition by water was probable; but whether that expedition would

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be against Philadelphia, or up the North river, for the purpose of seizing those passes in the mountains to which he had ever attributed so much importance, was a question which their present movements furnished no means of solving. Before Sir William Howe had in any degree developed his views, intelligence was received of the appearance of the enemy on lake Champlain, and that Ticonderoga was threatened. This intelligence, however, was not so explicit as to give any assurance that a serious effort was to be made in that quarter, or that the present appearance was any thing more than a feint, made by a small detachment, for the purpose of giving the attention of the Americans this direction, while the main army of Canada should be united to that of New York by sea. This uncertainty suspended for a few days the march of the troops designed for that service, in the event of a real attack on Ticonderoga; but Nixon's brigade was ordered to embark immediately for Albany, and the brigades of Parsons and Varnum were detached from Middlebrook to Peeks-kill.

The probability of an attempt by General Burgoyne to penetrate by the way of the lakes and the Hudson to Albany, gave additional strength to the opinion that the design of General Howe must be to seize the passes in the mountains on the Hudson, and thus effect a junction between the

the two armies, and at the same time secure the entire command of that river. Yet the commander in chief could not permit himself to yield entirely to this impression, lest any movement he should make in consequence of it, might open to the enemy a ready way by land to Philadelphia. His army therefore maintained its station at Middlebrook; but as the possession of the lower part of the North river, enabled General Howe to make a sudden and rapid movement against the highlands, he directed General Putnam, who commanded at Peeks-kill, to prepare for such an event, by calling to his aid all the militia that country could furnish. "No time," said he, "is to be lost. Much may be at stake, and I am persuaded, if General Howe means to go up the river, he will make a rapid and vigorous push to gain the highland passes. The militia cannot object to turning out, as the time of their detention cannot be long. Howe's movements will be soon understood."

A change of the position of the shipping from Prince's bay to the Watering-place, and a movement of the army, with the military stores and baggage, from the coast opposite Amboy to the north end of the island, relieved the commander in chief from any apprehension of a sudden march to Philadelphia, and determined him to change his own position. Leaving two regiments of infantry,

try, and one of light dragoons, to cover the country from Newark to Amboy, and protect the inhabitants against small plundering parties, he moved the main body of the army to Morristown, and advanced General Sullivan with his division on the way to Peeks-kill, as far as Pompton plains, with directions to be in constant readiness to proceed, or return, as the occasion might require. At Morristown, the American army was more convenient to the highlands of New York, and yet not so far removed from Middlebrook, as to be unable, should the enemy return to Jersey, to regain with the utmost certainty that camp, before it could be seized by General Howe.

Meanwhile, the British general prosecuted with the utmost diligence his plan of embarkation, which was necessarily attended with circumstances indicating a much longer voyage than that up the North river. These circumstances were immediately communicated to the eastern states, who were advised to make the necessary preparations for defence, should that country become once more the seat of war; while Congress was earnestly pressed to improve the fortifications on the Delaware, and the obstructions to the progress of a fleet, which had been placed in that river.

In the midst of these appearances, certain intelligence was received, that Burgoyne was in great force on the lakes, and was advancing with a powerful

a powerful army against Ticonderoga. This intelligence in a great measure confirmed the opinion to which General Washington was already much inclined, that although small parties might threaten other places, the main object of Sir William Howe must be to effect a junction with Burgoyne on the North river. The policy of such a system of co-operation appeared to him so obvious, that he believed it would certainly be adopted. Under this impression, he ordered Sullivan to proceed immediately to Peeks-kill, and moved himself to Pompton plains. If the intention of General Howe should be against the passes in the highlands, "we shall not," concludes his letter, stating this movement to Congress, "be too early, as a favourable wind and tide will carry him up in a few hours. On the other hand, if Philadelphia be his object, he cannot get round before we can arrive there; nor can he debark his troops, and proceed by land, before we can oppose him."

The conviction still remaining that the grand effort of the enemy would be made on the North river, General Washington, after halting a few days at Pompton plains, deeming it proper to approach still nearer, what he believed would be the great and interesting theatre of action, advanced to the Clove, where he determined to remain till the views of the enemy should be completely disclosed. In this situation, he at first requested

quested that the North Carolina troops, who had stopped at Philadelphia, might be ordered to join him; but on receiving information that great part of the British fleet had fallen down from the Watering-place to the Hook, he requested General Nash, who commanded the regiments of North Carolina, to halt at Trenton; and directed General Sullivan not to cross the North river. General Putnam, who commanded at Peeks-kill, was anxiously cautioned to use all his vigilance to guard against any sudden attempt that might be made on him from New York; success in which would be the more deeply felt, in consequence of the late calamity to the northward, where Ticonderoga and mount Independence had fallen into the hands of the enemy. The information that part of the fleet had dropped down to the Hook, was soon followed by intelligence that the shipping were moving from the Watering-place, up to New York, and that several transports convoyed by a ship of war had proceeded up as high as Dobbs' ferry. The passes in the highlands were now supposed to be certainly their object, and Sullivan, who had been advanced as far as New Windsor, was ordered immediately to cross the Hudson, and take post in the rear of Peeks-kill, on the east side of that river. Lord Stirling was also ordered to cross the river and join General Putnam.

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Thus uncertain must ever be the designs and embarrassing the movements of an enemy, who, by possessing without competition the command of the water, can transfer himself with facility to any state on the Atlantic; and threaten at once, and with impunity, the whole line of our extensive coast.

While the general thus anxiously watched the perplexing movements of the enemy, a very agreeable and unlooked-for piece of intelligence was received from the eastward. The command of the British troops in Rhode island had now devolved on Major-general Prescott. Thinking himself perfectly secure in an island, the water surrounding which was believed to be entirely guarded by his cruisers, and at the head of an army greatly superior to any force then collected in that department, he indulged himself in convenient quarters, rather distant from camp; and being entirely unapprehensive of danger, was remiss with respect to the guards about his person. Information of this negligence was communicated to the main army, and an expeditiou to the island was planned for the purpose of surprising Prescott in his quarters, and bringing him off. This spirited enterprise was undertaken by Lieutenant-colonel Barton of the Rhode-Island militia, and was executed with great courage and address.

On the night of the tenth, he embarked on board

board four whale boats, at Warwick-neck, with a party consisting of about forty persons, including Captains Adams and Philips, and several other officers; and proceeding about ten miles by water, unobserved by the guard boats of the enemy, although several ships of war lay in that quarter, landed on the west of the island, about midway between Newport and Bristol ferry, and marching to the quarters of General Prescott, distant about a mile, very dexterously seized the centinel at his door, and one of his aids-de-camp. The general himself was taken out of bed, and, without being allowed time to put on his clothes, was conveyed with equal secrecy and dispatch, to a place of safety.

The success attending this intrepid and handsome enterprise gave more joy throughout America, than it would have been entitled to from its importance, because it was supposed to secure the liberation of General Lee, by enabling Washington to offer for him in exchange, an officer of equal rank; an event rendered, perhaps, the more agreeable, by having acquired that officer under circumstances not very unlike those which had lost Lee to the American service.

Congress, in a resolution, expressed their high sense of the gallant conduct of Colonel Barton, and his party; and, as a mark of their approbation, presented him with a sword.

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As the fleet fell down towards Sandy Hook, General Washington withdrew slowly from the Clove, and disposed his army in different divisions, so as to march with the utmost rapidity to any point which might be attacked. He, at the same time, recommended to Congress, to assemble the militia of the lower counties of Pennsylvania, at Chester, and of Delaware, at Wilmington; while a number of persons should be employed to keep a look-out from the capes of Delaware, in order to give notice of the first appearance of a fleet off that coast. He also requested the governor of New Jersey to call out the militia contiguous to the Delaware, to meet at Gloucester, a small town on the east side of that river, just below Philadelphia.

At length, after considerable, and probably unavoidable delay, the embarkation of the British army was completed, and the fleet put to sea.

The force embarked with General Howe on this expedition, consisted of thirty-six British and Hessian battalions, including the light infantry and grenadiers, with a powerful artillery; a New York corps called the Queen's Rangers, and a regiment of light horse. The residue of the army was divided between New York and Rhode island. Seventeen battalions, with a regiment of light horse, and the remainder of the new provincial corps, were left for the protection of New

York and the adjoining islands, as well as to co-operate with Burgoyne. Seven battalions were stationed in Rhode island. It is said that the original intention of General Howe was to have taken with him a still greater force; but, on the remonstrance of General Sir Henry Clinton, who was left to command at New York, and who represented the danger to which the islands would be exposed, from the extensiveness of their coasts, and the great number of posts necessary to be maintained, he landed several regiments.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER III.

General Washington commences his March to the Delaware—He takes Measures for checking Burgoyne—Expedition of General Sullivan against Staten Island—British Fleet come up the Chesapeak and land an Army, under Sir William Howe, at Elk River—General Washington advances to Brandywine—Lord Cornwallis attacks Maxwell's Corps and compels them to retreat—The American Army defeated at Brandywine, and retreat to Chester—After a slight Skirmish compelled again to retire, cross the Schuylkill, and proceed to French Creek—General Wayne surprised, and after a sharp Action compelled to retreat—Washington marches to Pottsgrove—General Howe takes Possession of Philadelphia—Congress removes to Lancaster.

ON receiving intelligence that the British fleet had sailed from New York, the American army immediately commenced its march in different divisions to the Delaware. About the time of its departure, a letter from Sir William Howe, directed to General Burgoyne at Quebec, containing the information "that he was exhibiting the

appearance of moving to the southward, while his real intent was against Boston, from whence he would co-operate with the army of Canada," was delivered to General Putnam by the person who had received it, as was said, for the purpose of carrying it to Quebec, and was immediately transmitted by General Putnam to the commander in chief. The stratagem entirely failed of producing the impression it was designed to make. General Washington had no hesitation in determining the letter to have been written with the design that it should fall into his hands, and mislead him with respect to the views of the enemy. It served to confirm the opinion, either that Philadelphia was the object, or that General Howe had put to sea with the fleet merely to draw him from the North river, after which he would suddenly return, and by a rapid movement seize the passes in the highlands. The danger to which the fleet was exposed of being dispersed at sea, rendered it, however, improbable that a feint, attended with so much hazard, would be made. That consideration decided him in the opinion, that the movement to the southward was real; yet all suspicions concerning the North river were not entirely removed.

Whilst the utmost exercise of vigilance and judgment on the part of the American general were necessary to conduct the operations of the army under his immediate command, the events

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in the north were too deeply interesting, not to engage a large share of his attention. He felt strongly the necessity of checking the progress of Burgoyne, and took with promptitude those measures which might effect so important an object. Letters were addressed to the governments of the eastern states, urging them to reinforce with their militia the retreating army of that department, and to the generals of the western parts of those states, requesting them to get in readiness to move with the utmost expedition. Major-generals Arnold and Lincoln, both relied on for their influence with the eastern militia, both esteemed excellent officers, the former of whom had, from the commencement of the war, displayed in the field a spirit of intrepidity which could not be surpassed, were directed to join the northern army. Three brigades of New England continental troops were detached from Peeks-kill on the same service; and soon afterwards Colonel Morgan's regiment of riflemen, and two regiments of New York, were also ordered on it. Thus did General Washington, with that spirit of genuine patriotism he was in the course of exhibiting, weaken himself, in order to strengthen other generals, where strength would be more useful. The fame of being himself the leader of the victorious army did not, with a false glare, dazzle his eyes, or con-

ceal from his view the superior public advantage to be derived from defeating the plans of Burgoyne.

As some uncertainty still remained respecting the destination of the fleet, it was thought unadvisable to weaken too much the post at Peeks-kill, and, therefore, the New England troops intended to act with the army immediately under the command of General Washington, were directed to cross the Hudson, and wait on its western banks for further orders, while other divisions were halted at different encampments, between that river and the Delaware. On the 30th of July, all these doubts were supposed to be removed by the appearance of the whole fleet off the capes of Delaware. Orders were immediately given for assembling the detached parts of the army in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia, to which place the general immediately proceeded in person; and also for marching from the North river as many of the continental troops remaining at that station, as could be spared from its defence against the force still in New York.

Scarcely were these orders given, when the aspect of affairs was totally changed, and it was deemed proper to countermand them. An express was received from Cape May with information, that the fleet had sailed out of the bay of Delaware, and was proceeding eastward. The brigades which had

had marched from Peeks-kill were ordered immediately to return, and the other divisions of the army, which were on the road, were directed to halt on their present ground for further orders. From this time, no intelligence respecting the fleet was received till about the 7th of August, when it appeared a few leagues to the south of the capes of Delaware, after which it disappeared, and was not again heard of till late in that month. In the mean while, the most perplexing uncertainty concerning its destination was universal. The fact was, that on entering the capes of Delaware, the intelligence received by General Howe concerning the difficulties which would attend an attempt to carry his fleet up that bay and river, determined him to relinquish his original design, and to transport his army to the Chesapeak. Having gone out to sea again with this intention, he was so detained by contrary winds, as to be unable to reach the mouth of the Chesapeak till the 16th of August.

General Washington employed this interval in examining the country about Philadelphia, and the works below that place. Having paid great attention to them, he was entirely of opinion, that the defence of the river should be confined * to Fort or Mud island, and Red bank, a piece of

* An attempt had been made to take and defend a position lower down the river, at Billing's point.

high ground on the Jersey shore, opposite the island. This opinion was communicated to Congress in a long letter, stating at large the reasons on which it was founded, which letter also intimated his intention to march to Coryell's ferry, a position sufficiently near to Philadelphia, and from which he would be enabled sooner to gain the North river, should the next appearance of the fleet be to the eastward.

While the designs of the enemy remained uncertain, a report was circulated in New York, which was countenanced by the British officers, and communicated by deserters and spies, that the fleet was only to shew itself in the bay of Delaware, and then suddenly return to the North river, for the purpose of enabling Howe to co-operate with Burgoyne. These reports made no impression on Washington. He was confident that the officers of the British army must be profoundly ignorant of the views of their general, and that any intelligence collected from their conversations, could be only founded on conjecture, or had been only communicated to deceive. Yet he had always deemed it the part dictated by prudence, to hold the important passes of the highlands till the views of the enemy should be ascertained, and their force stationed in sufficient strength to resist any sudden attempt which might be made upon them before his army could be brought to their defence. In

pursuance

pursuance of this system, he had very early made large requisitions on Connecticut and New York, for militia to supply the place of the continental troops ordered to the north; and these requisitions had as usual been readily complied with; but, as was also usual, these troops soon became extremely impatient to return to their homes. They thought themselves competent judges of the necessity of continuing in service, and they could not suppose it possible, when no enemy was in view, that any motives could exist to justify the immense sacrifice made of their private interest and comfort, by detaining them at this season from their farms.

It was found difficult to account for the length of time which had elapsed since any information had been received respecting the fleet of the enemy. As the wind had generally blown from the south, it was supposed certain, that had its destination been to the eastward, it must have been discovered ere this, by some of the numerous cruisers on that coast; and had it not been for the North river, it must have reached that place in less than half the time which had intervened since it had disappeared. It was, therefore, concluded by General Washington, that Sir William Howe must be proceeding to the southward, and though at first his suspicions were directed to the Chesapeak, the time now appeared too considerable to have been employed in reaching that bay. Beyond the Chesapeak

peak there appeared no object worthy the attention of the grand army, except Charleston, where stores to a very great amount were collected; and against Charleston he now began to conjecture the expedition was designed: even should this conjecture be well founded, it was entirely impracticable to reach that place with his army in time for its relief. Should the attempt be made, the troops would be very indiscreetly exposed to the dangers of that unhealthy climate in this sickly season, and by the time they could reach Carolina, General Howe might re-embark his army, and return to act against Philadelphia, or the posts on the North river, as might best promote his views, without the possibility of encountering an opposition which could in any degree check the execution of his plans. To counterbalance the injury which might be sustained in the south, the army under his particular command ought, he conceived, to avail itself of the weakness of the enemy in the north, and to be immediately employed, either against the army at Canada, or the posts of the British in New York, as might promise most advantage. He had been assiduous since General Howe left that place, in collecting the most accurate information of the strength and position of the troops remaining for its defence; and believed that consequences very important to the issue of the war would ensue from directing all his efforts either against

against Burgoyne or Clinton. To be in readiness for the execution of the one or the other of these plans, he had determined to move on towards the North river; but on the 21st of August, the very day of his communicating this determination to Congress, intelligence was received of the appearance of the enemy in full force in the Chesapeak.

Orders were immediately given to the different divisions of the army to unite, with the utmost expedition, in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia, in order to proceed towards the head of the Chesapeak; and the militia of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, and the northern counties of Virginia, were directed to take the field. These orders for marching were received by General Sullivan, who had been encamped in Jersey, about Hanover, just on his return from an expedition to Staten island. The force of the enemy on that island amounted to between two and three thousand men; of whom nearly one thousand were provincials, who were stationed at different places on the coast opposite the Jersey shore. The British and German troops, amounting, according to the intelligence of General Sullivan, to sixteen hundred men, were in a fortified camp near the Watering-place. General Sullivan thought it practicable to surprise and bring off the provincials before they could be supported by the European troops; and he was the more stimulated

lated to make the attempt, by their occasional incursions into Jersey. In one of these, very lately made, as far as Woodbridge, they had carried off a number of cattle, and about twelve individuals noted for their attachment to the American cause. This expedition was undertaken with the select troops of his division, aided by a few Jersey militia under Colonel Frelinghuysen. They had to march about twenty miles to the place of embarkation, where only six boats had been procured. Three of these were allowed to Colonel Ogden, who commanded one detachment intended to attack Colonel Laurence, who lay near the old Blazing-star ferry, and Colonels Dungau and Allen, who lay about two miles from each other, towards Amboy. The other three were taken by General de Borre, who was accompanied by General Sullivan in person, and who was to attack Colonel Barton near the new Blazing-star ferry; and having secured that party, to assist Ogden. General Smallwood with his brigade was to cross at Halsey's point, and attack Buskirk's regiment, which lay near Decker's ferry. All the troops crossed over into the island before day, without being perceived by the enemy. From being misconducted by his guides, Smallwood began his attack on a different point from that which was intended, in consequence of which the regiment he attacked made its escape; but

Ogden

Ogden and de Borre succeeded to a very considerable extent. Laurence and Barton were completely surprised, and both of them, with several of their officers and men, were taken. The alarm being now given, it was necessary to use the utmost dispatch in drawing his forces off the island. It had been impracticable to obtain a sufficient number of boats to embark them all at the same time; and some confusion appears to have prevailed in this part of the business. General Campbell, with a considerable force, advanced upon them; and the rear guard, after defending themselves for some time with great gallantry, finding the boats could not be brought back to take them over the channel, were under the necessity of surrendering prisoners of war.

This enterprise appears to have been well planned, and in its commencement to have been happily executed. Its disastrous conclusion is most probably attributable to the want of a sufficient number of boats, without which the expedition ought not to have been undertaken.

In his letters to the commander in chief, and to Congress, General Sullivan reported, that he had brought off eleven officers, and one hundred and thirty privates. He was also of opinion, that a considerable number must have been killed in the different skirmishes which took place in the morning. He stated his own loss to have been one major,

major, one captain, one lieutenant, and ten privates, killed, and fifteen wounded; and nine officers, among whom were Majors Stewart, Tillard and Woodson, and one hundred and twenty-seven privates, prisoners.

In the account given of this action by General Campbell, he stated himself to have made two hundred and fifty-nine prisoners, among which were one lieutenant-colonel, three majors, two captains, and fifteen inferior officers.

The British fleet having entered the Chesapeak, sailed towards its head with favourable winds; and, without experiencing any disaster, entered Elk river, up which they proceeded as high as it was safely navigable. On the 25th of August, the army landed, without any show of opposition, at the ferry. On the 27th, Sir William Howe marched with one division to the head of the Elk, and the next day advanced his van to Gray's hill, leaving General Knyphausen with three brigades at the place of landing, and stationing one brigade at the communication between the two encampments. On the 28th of August, General Knyphausen was ordered to cross the ferry, and take post at Cecil court-house, from whence he was to proceed on the east side, and effect a junction with Sir William Howe, seven or eight miles south of Christine.*

* Letter of General Howe.

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The whole force of the British army which landed at Elk ferry has been generally computed at eighteen thousand men. They were in good health and spirits, trained to the service, admirably supplied with all the implements of war, and led by a general of experience, and unquestionable military talents. If the army were in any respect defective, it was in cavalry and draught horses. They had been greatly distressed for forage through the preceding winter, and their horses had suffered in the long voyage from New York to Elk river.

Early in the morning, the day before Sir William Howe had landed at Elk ferry, the American general passed through Philadelphia on his way to meet the enemy. This route was taken in the hope of making some impression on the disaffected of that city, many of whom had been greatly deceived respecting the strength of his army. After stopping some short time on the Brandywine to refresh, and afford an opportunity of reconnoitring both the country and the enemy, the divisions of Greene and Stephens proceeded nearer to the head of the Elk, and encamped behind White-clay creek.

Congress had directed General Smallwood and Colonel Gist to command the militia of Maryland, who had been ordered by General Washington to assemble near the head of the bay, for the

the purpose of cutting off small parties which might be sent out for horses and forage, and, generally, of threatening and harassing the rear of the enemy, when his march to Philadelphia should commence. General Cadwallader, in whose activity, talents, and zeal great confidence was placed, was likewise requested by the commander in chief to furnish every aid in his power towards getting out the militia, and to take charge of them till the arrival of Smallwood. The militia of the two lower counties of Delaware were also directed to assemble under General Rodney, in the rear of the enemy, and to co-operate with those of Maryland. Colonel Richardson's continental regiment, which had been stationed on the eastern shore, was also ordered to join this corps.

The militia of Pennsylvania, under the command of Major-general Armstrong, were expected to act in concert with the army which was to oppose the enemy in front. Great exertions were used to bring them immediately into the field, and to employ them in watching those parties which might be detached to seize horses, carriages, and cattle, which it was foreseen must be the first objects of the enemy.

The scarcity of arms was now severely felt. The militia in general manifested some degree of spirit; and, although the numbers required by Congress did not take the field, yet more appeared

peared than could be armed. Those nearest danger were, as was usual, most slow in collecting; but it is probable that the delays experienced were principally occasioned by their exposed situation, and necessary attention to the care of their families and property.

The real strength of the American army cannot be stated with certainty. It was estimated by Sir William Howe at fifteen thousand, including militia; and this estimate probably did not far exceed their real numbers, as appeared by the returns. But it is an unfortunate fact, attributable in some degree to the badness of their clothing, and scarcity of tents, and in some degree to the neglect of the commissary's department to provide those articles of food which contribute to the preservation of health, that the effective force was always very far short of their total number. Including militia, the effectives did not exceed eleven thousand.

Morgan's regiment of riflemen, which had been found particularly useful during the incursion of the enemy into Jersey, having been detached in order to join the northern army, a corps of light infantry was now formed, consisting of nine officers, eight serjeants, and a hundred rank and file, from each brigade, the command of which was given to General Maxwell, who, in the course of the last winter, had acquired some reputation as a partisan. This corps was advanced to Iron hill,

about three miles in front of White-clay creek, and extended towards Aitkins' tavern. The cavalry, consisting of four regiments, amounting to about nine hundred men, including persons of every description, were employed principally on the lines, in watching the enemy, gaining intelligence, and picking up stragglers.

The intended movement of General Howe, on the third of September, was discovered from his previous arrangements; and it was recommended by the commander in chief to General Maxwell, to post a choice body of men in the night on an advantageous part of the road, in order to annoy him on his march. In the morning of the third, General Grant being left with six battalions at the head of Elk, to guard the baggage, and preserve a communication with the shipping, the two divisions under Lord Cornwallis and General Knyphausen moved forward, and formed a junction about Pencada, or Aitkins' tavern, where they encamped, with the right at Pencada, and the left extending across Christine, towards Newark. In their way, the column under Lord Cornwallis fell in with and attacked Maxwell, who made a short resistance, and then retreated over White-clay creek, with the loss of about forty killed and wounded. The loss sustained by the enemy, as stated in the official letter of Sir William Howe, was only three killed, and nineteen wounded.

wounded. The opinion of the Americans, corroborated by accounts from the country people, ascribed to their arms, in this skirmish, much more effect.

On the 5th of September, the whole American army, except the light infantry, which remained on the lines, took a position behind Red-clay creek, having its left at Newport on the Christine, and on the road leading directly from the camp of Sir William Howe to Philadelphia. Its right extended a considerable distance up the creek to Hockesen township. On this ground the general thought it not improbable that the fate of Philadelphia, and of the campaign, might be decided; and here he resorted to all the means in his power to encourage his troops, and stimulate them to the greatest exertions.

General Grant, having embarked, on the 8th, the tents and heavy baggage on board the ships, joined the grand army, which was again put in motion. The main body advanced by Newark, upon the right of the American encampment, and took post within four miles of that place, extending its left still further up the country. A strong column in the mean time made a show of attacking in front, and after manœuvring for some time, halted at Milton, within two miles of the centre.

On reconnoitring their situation, General Washington very clearly perceived that the column in

front was designed only to amuse, while their left should effect the principal and real object: that object most probably was to turn his right, and suddenly crossing the Brandywine, to seize the heights on the north side of that river, and thus cut off his communication with Philadelphia. To prevent the execution of this plan, it was necessary to change his ground. He therefore moved very early in the night, and, crosssing the Brandywine, took post next morning behind that river, on the heights extending from Chadd's ford southeastwardly. The light corps under General Maxwell was advanced in front, and advantageously placed on the hills south of the river, on the road leading over Chadd's ford, in order to gall and skirmish with the advanced parties of the enemy, if, as was expected, they should approach in that direction. The militia under General Armstrong were posted at a ford two miles below Chadd's, and the right extended some miles above, to guard other passes deemed less practicable. In this position, General Washington attended the movements of the adverse army.

In the evening, Howe marched forward in two columns. Lieutenant-general Knyphausen with the left, encamped at New garden, and Kennet's square, while Lord Cornwallis with the right, occupied a piece of ground lower down at Hockesen meeting-house. Early the next morning, they united

united at Kennet's square, about seven miles from the American army; from whence their parties were advanced on the roads leading to Lancaster, to Chadd's ford, and to Wilmington.

The armies were now within seven miles of each other, with only the Brandywine between them, which, being fordable almost every where, could oppose no effective barrier to a general engagement. This was sought by Howe; and not avoided by Washington. It was impossible to protect Philadelphia without a victory, and this object was deemed throughout America, and especially by Congress, of such infinite magnitude, as to require that an action should be hazarded for its attainment.

Light parties were accordingly detached to watch the enemy in every direction, and to give the earliest intelligence of their movements.

On receiving in the morning of the eleventh, soon after day, information that the whole British army was in motion, advancing on the direct road leading over Chadd's ford, the Americans were immediately under arms; and were arranged in order of battle, for the purpose of contesting the passage of the river. The skirmishing between the advanced parties soon commenced, and by ten o'clock, Maxwell's corps, with very little loss on either side, was entirely driven over the Brandywine below the ford. Knyphausen, who com-

manded this column, paraded on the heights, reconnoitred the American army, and by various movements appeared to be making dispositions to force a passage over the river. Every moment the attempt was expected to be made. A skirt of woods with the river divided them from Maxwell's corps, small parties of whom occasionally crossed over, and kept up with them a scattering fire, by which very little execution was done. One of these parties, however, led by Captains Waggoner and Porterfield, engaged their flank guard very closely, killed a captain with ten or fifteen privates, cleared the wood of the enemy, and were at one time on the point of taking a field piece which had been placed there to annoy the light infantry. The sharpness of the skirmish soon drew a large body of the enemy to that quarter, and the Americans were again driven over the Brandywine.

About eleven in the morning, information was given, which reached General Washington about noon, that a very large column of the enemy with many field pieces, had taken a road leading from Kennet's square directly up the country, and had fallen into the great valley road south of the Brandywine, and above its forks: that they had then turned into the valley road, and were on their march towards Tremble's and Jeffery's ford. This information was given by Lieutenant-colonel Ross of Pennsylvania, who was in their rear, and who estimated

estimated their numbers at about five thousand men. Colonel Bland of the cavalry, who was also on the right, gave information about the same time, that he had seen two brigades advancing on that road, and that the dust appeared to rise in their rear for a considerable distance.

On receiving this information, Washington formed the very bold design of detaching Sullivan and Lord Stirling to fall on the left of the column conducted by Lord Cornwallis, while he should cross Chadd's ford in person, and attack Knyphausen with the centre and left wing of his army.* In the critical moment when this plan was to be executed, counter intelligence was received inducing an opinion, that the movement of the British on their left had been merely a feint, and that the column under Lord Cornwallis, after making demonstrations of crossing the Brandywine above its forks, must have actually marched down the southern side of that river, to reunite itself with Knyphausen. A major of the militia who alleged that he left the forks of Brandywine so late in the day, that it was supposed Lord Cornwallis must have passed them by that time, gave assurances that there was no appearance of the enemy in that quarter; and some light horse who had been

* Ramsay. Gordon.

sent out to reconnoitre the road, returned with the same information.

The uncertainty produced by this contradictory intelligence was at length removed, and about two o'clock in the afternoon it was ascertained, that the column which was led by Lord Cornwallis, accompanied by Sir William Howe in person, and which had taken a circuit of about seventeen miles, was in great force, and might be expected to make a very formidable attack.

The proper disposition was immediately made to receive them. The divisions commanded by Sullivan, Stirling, and Stephen, took new ground; advanced a little further up the Brandywine, and fronted the column of the enemy now marching down that river. The division lately Lincoln's, now commanded by Wayne, remained at Chadd's ford, for the purpose of keeping Knyphausen in check; in which service Maxwell's light infantry was to co-operate with them. Greene's division, accompanied by General Washington in person, formed a reserve, and took a central position between the right and left wings.

The divisions detached against the column led by Lord Cornwallis, formed hastily on the advantageous piece of ground above Birmingham meeting-house, with their left near the Brandywine, and having both flanks covered by a thick wood.

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The artillery was judiciously posted, and the disposition of the whole was said by the enemy to have been well made. Unfortunately, in taking their ground, Sullivan's division made too large a circuit, and was scarcely formed when the attack commenced.

On coming within view of the Americans, the British army, which was advancing in three columns, instantly formed the line of battle, and about half after four the action began. It was kept up warmly for some time. The American right, which was in some disorder, first gave way. Their flight afforded the enemy great advantages over the remaining divisions, whose flank was thereby exposed to a very galling fire. They continued to break from the right, and in a short time the whole line gave way and was completely routed. The right attempted to rally, but on being briskly charged by the enemy, again broke, and the flight became general

On the first commencement of the action on the right, General Washington pressed forward with General Greene to the support of that wing. It was, however, impossible to get up, though they marched with the utmost rapidity, till the rout of that part of the army had become complete. Yet he served to check the pursuit. After having covered the rear for a small distance, the tenth Virginia regiment, commanded by Colonel Stevens, and a regiment

regiment of Pennsylvania, commanded by Colonel Stewart, neither of which had been in action, were posted on an advantageous piece of ground on the road taken by the defeated army, for the purpose of checking the enemy, and securing the retreat. These orders were very gallantly executed, and the fire of these regiments made such an impression, as, in addition to the approach of night, induced Sir William Howe, after dispersing them, to give over the pursuit.

When the right was found to be fully engaged with Lord Cornwallis, Knyphausen made dispositions for crossing the river in reality. Chadd's ford was defended by an intrenchment, and battery, with three field pieces, and a five and half inch howitzer. After some resistance, the work was forced, and the defeat of the right being about that time known, no further opposition was made in this quarter. The whole army retreated that night to Chester, and the next day to Philadelphia.

The loss sustained by the Americans in this action, has been estimated at three hundred killed, and six hundred wounded. Between three and four hundred, principally the wounded, were made prisoners.

As must ever be the case in new-raised armies, unused to danger, and from which undeserving officers have not yet been expelled, their conduct was not uniform. Some regiments, especially among

among those who had served the preceding campaign, maintained their ground with the firmness and intrepidity of the most disciplined veterans, while others gave way as soon as they were pressed by the enemy. The authors of a very correct history of the war,* speaking of the action, say, "a part of their troops, among whom were particularly numbered some of the Virginia regiments, and the whole corps of artillery, behaved exceedingly well in some of the actions of this day, exhibiting a degree of order, firmness, and resolution, and preserving such a countenance in extremely sharp service, as would not have discredited veterans. Some other bodies of their troops behaved very badly."†

The official letter of Sir William Howe, as published in the London Gazette, stated his loss at rather less than one hundred killed, and four hundred wounded. As the Americans sustained scarcely any injury in their retreat, this inequality of loss, if the account be correct, can only be attributed to the inferiority of their arms. Many of the muskets of the American soldiers were scarcely fit for service; and, being of unequal calibre, a cir-

* Ann. Reg.

† General de Borre's brigade broke first, and on an inquiry being directed by Congress into his conduct, he resigned. A misunderstanding existed between him and Sullivan, on the right of whose division he was placed.

cumstance

cumstance of infinite importance, their cartridges could not be so well fitted, and consequently their fire could not be so much relied on for its execution as that of the enemy, whose arms were of excellent quality, of the same dimensions, requiring each precisely the same quantity of powder and weight of ball, and for all of which proper cartridges could be prepared on a general scale. This radical, and, for the present, incurable defect, which had existed from the commencement of the war, and which continued till removed by large supplies from Europe, made its impression on all the operations of the army, and diminished the effect of all their exertions.

From the ardour with which the commander in chief had inspired his troops before this action, and which their defeat did not entirely extinguish, it is probable that the conflict would have been more severe, had the intelligence respecting the movement of the left wing of the enemy been such, as to have induced earlier preparations for their reception. Raw troops, changing their ground in the moment of action, and attacked in the agitation of moving, are easily thrown into confusion, from which it is extremely difficult to extricate them. This seems to have been the critical situation of a part of Sullivan's division, and to have occasioned the right to break before Greene could be brought up to support it, after which

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it was impossible to retrieve the fortune of the day.

Yet had the best disposition of the troops, which subsequent intelligence would dictate, been made at the time, the issue of the day could not, on any reasonable calculation, have been favourable to the Americans. Their inferiority in numbers, in discipline, and in arms, was too great to leave them a probable prospect of victory. A battle, however, was not to be avoided. Public opinion, and the opinion of Congress required it. To have given up Philadelphia without an attempt to preserve it, would have excited discontents, which, in a country like the United States, might be productive of very serious mischief; and action, though attended with defeat, provided the loss was not too great, must be of service to an army, in which, not only the military talents, but even the courage of officers, some of them of high rank, was yet to be ascertained.

Among the wounded were Brigadier-general Woodford, and the Marquis de la Fayette.

The battle of Brandywine was not considered as decisive by Congress, the general, or the army. An opinion every where prevailed, and was carefully cherished, that the enemy had gained only the ground; and that their loss was still more considerable than that which had been sustained by the Americans. Congress appeared determined to risk another

another battle before the metropolis of America should be yielded. They discovered no intention of changing their place of session, and on the first intelligence of the event of the eleventh of September, resolved that fifteen hundred continental troops should be immediately ordered from Peeks-kill; that General Dickinson, with the militia of New Jersey, should be requested to reinforce the army in Pennsylvania; that the executive of the state should be requested to order out all the militia of Philadelphia, and the adjacent country; that General Smallwood and Colonel Gist, with the continental troops, and militia under their command, and a state regiment belonging to Virginia, then at Alexandria, the service of which had been offered to the continent, should also be ordered immediately to join the main army; and that General Washington be directed to give the necessary orders for completing the defences of the Delaware river. A few days afterwards additional resolutions were entered into, authorizing the commander in chief to impress all waggons, horses, and provisions, necessary for the use of the army; and to give certificates to the owners, who were to be paid from the continental treasury.

From Chester, small parties were detached to Wilmington, and up all the roads leading towards the enemy, for the purpose of collecting the stragglers who had not yet come in; and the army was

was ordered immediately to march through Derby over the Schuylkill bridge, to their former ground near the falls of that river. General Greene's division, which, having been less in action, was more entire than any other part of the continental army, covered the rear; and General Maxwell, with the light infantry, was directed to remain at Chester till the next day, as the rallying point for the small detached parties, and the straggling soldiers who might yet be found in the neighbourhood.

The commander in chief exerted himself with great address to repair the loss which had been sustained. His orders were calculated to impress on the troops an opinion that they had manifested no inferiority to their adversaries. They were assured that, from every account which had been received, the loss of the enemy exceeded theirs; and that there was every reason to hope that the issue of another action would be more favourable.

To the requisition for completing the works on the Delaware, the general answered, that the service would be essentially injured, by employing upon them, at this critical juncture, while another battle was contemplated, any part of the continental troops; that, if he should be enabled to oppose the enemy successfully in the field, the works would be unnecessary; if not, it would be impossible

possible to maintain them. It was therefore most essential to the safety of Philadelphia to keep his army in full force. The works, he said, had been made under the particular direction of Monsieur de Coudray,* who, without doubt, would pay every attention to their completion and security which the present state of affairs would admit of.

Having allowed his army, on the ground near Germantown, only one day for repose and refreshment, he then recrossed the Schuylkill, and proceeded on the Lancaster road with the intention of meeting the enemy, and trying the fate of another battle.

Sir William Howe lay, the night of the 11th, on the field of battle, where he continued with the greater part of his army the succeeding day, detaching from thence Major-general Grant with

* A French officer who had engaged with Mr. Deane, minister of the United States at Paris, to enter into the American service as general of the artillery, to be subject to the authority only of the commander in chief. He brought with him several other officers for whom he also stipulated high rank in the army. This contract very much embarrassed Congress. Monsieur de Coudray had attended to the fortifications, and now expressed a willingness to serve for the present with his corps as a volunteer, having only such rank as would ensure an exchange in the event of their being captured. On his way to join the army, he was drowned in the Schuylkill.

two

two brigades to Concord meeting-house. On the thirteenth, Lord Cornwallis joined General Grant, and proceeded towards Chester. Another detachment took possession of Wilmington, to which place the sick and wounded were escorted. On their first appearance, the militia of Delaware, who had been assembled under General Rodney, dispersed of themselves.

Foreseeing that the British army must have its movements much encumbered with the wounded, whom he believed to be more numerous than they appear in reality to have been, or must remove them under a guard which, most probably, could not be very strong, General Washington had ordered Smallwood, with all the force he could possibly collect, to hang on the rear or flank of the enemy as opportunity might offer, and hold himself in a condition to strike at the detachment which should have the sick and wounded in its care, if such detachment should be made; or, if not, to harass their march, in the course of which, if encumbered with all their wounded, they must necessarily expose some vulnerable parts.

To prevent a sudden movement to Philadelphia by the lower road, which was apprehended from the corps near Chester, the bridge over the Schuylkill was ordered to be loosened from its moorings, to swing on the Philadelphia side; and Major-general Armstrong, with the Pennsylvania militia, was directed

rected to guard the passes over that river, for the defence of which Monsieur de Portails, chief of engineers, attended him, in order to construct such sudden works as might be of immediate use.

On the fifteenth, the American army, intending to gain the ground on the left of the British, reached the Warren tavern on the Lancaster road, about twenty-three miles from Philadelphia, where intelligence was received very early next morning, that the enemy was approaching in two columns. Finding it now too late to gain the ground originally wished for, the whole army was immediately put in motion for the purpose of meeting and engaging them in front.

Sir William Howe had designed to gain the Lancaster road, and from thence to govern his subsequent operations by the circumstances which should present themselves. With this intention, he had marched very early in the morning of the sixteenth, in two columns, towards Goshen; and whilst on the road, was informed that General Washington was advancing towards him, and was within five miles of that place.

Both armies immediately prepared with great alacrity for battle. The advanced parties had met, and were beginning to skirmish, when they were separated by a heavy rain, which becoming more and more violent, soon rendered the retreat of the Americans a matter of absolute necessity.

The

The great inferiority of their arms, which imposed on them at all times the cruel task of engaging the enemy on unequal terms, never brought them into such imminent peril as on this occasion. Their gun-locks, not being well secured, many of their muskets were soon unfit for use. Their cartridge boxes had been so inartificially constructed, as not sufficiently to protect their ammunition from the severity of the tempest. Their cartridges were consequently soon damaged; and this mischief was the more serious, as very many of the soldiers were without bayonets.

The army being rendered thus totally unfit for action, the design of giving the enemy battle was, necessarily, though reluctantly, abandoned, and a retreat commenced. It was continued all the day, and great part of the night, through a cold and most distressing rain, and very deep roads. A few hours before day they reached the Yellow springs, where a halt was made; and, after allowing the troops some short time for repose, the state of their arms and ammunition was examined, and the important fact was fully disclosed, that scarcely a musket in a regiment could be discharged, and scarcely one cartridge in a box, of which forty rounds per man had just been drawn, was capable of being used. This state of things suggested the precaution of removing to a still greater distance from the enemy, in order to refit their

arms, obtain a fresh supply of ammunition, which could not be had in camp, and to revive the spirits of the army. The general therefore determined to retire up the Schuylkill, and cross it about Warwick furnace, at Parker's ferry, where a fresh supply of ammunition and a few muskets might be obtained in time to dispute the passage of the Schuylkill, and make yet another effort to save Philadelphia. As this movement rendered the situation of General Smallwood more dangerous, by putting it in the power of the enemy to direct a larger force against him, he was ordered to join the army at Warwick furnace, on French creek. These arrangements being made, Washington crossed the Schuylkill at Parker's ferry, and proceeded to replace, as far as was in his power, the arms which had been rendered unfit for use.

The extreme severity of the weather entirely stopped the British army, and prevented any pursuit. They secured themselves against it as well as was in their power, and made no other movement than merely to unite their columns, until the 18th, when they took post at Trydruffin, from whence a party was detached to Valley forge, in order to seize a magazine of flour, and other stores which had been there deposited.*

From French creek, to which the American army had retreated in consequence of the damage sus-

* General Howe's letter.

tained

tained by their arms and ammunition from the rain of the 18th, General Wayne, with his division, was detached to the rear of the enemy, with orders to join General Smallwood; and carefully concealing himself and his movements, to seize every occasion which their march might offer, of engaging them to advantage. Meanwhile General Washington crossed the Schuylkill at Parker's ferry, and encamped on the eastern banks of that river, on both sides of Perkyomi creek. Detachments from his army were posted at various fords, over which it was presumed an attempt might be made to force a passage.

General Wayne lay in the woods near the entrance of the road from Derby into that leading to Lancaster, about three miles in the rear of the left wing of the British troops encamped at Trydruffin, where he believed himself, in consequence of the precautions he had taken, to be perfectly secure. But the country was so generally disaffected, that Sir William Howe received accurate accounts of his position and of his force, and detached Major-general Grey to surprise him. This was effectually accomplished. The fire of his piquet guard, about eleven o'clock in the night of the twentieth, who were driven in with charged bayonets, gave the first intelligence of the approach of the enemy. Wayne instantly formed his division; and while his right was very fiercely

assailed, directed a retreat by the left, under cover of a few regiments, who for a short time withstood the violence of the shock. He said that they gave the assailants some very close and well directed fires; which must have done considerable execution, and that after retreating from the ground on which the engagement commenced, they formed again at a small distance from the scene of action, but that both parties drew off without renewing the conflict. He states his own loss at about one hundred and fifty* killed and wounded; that of the enemy, from their own accounts, was only seven.

When the attack commenced, General Smallwood, who was coming up to join Wayne, a circumstance entirely unexpected by General Grey, was within less than a mile of him, and had he commanded troops who were to be relied on, might have given a very different turn to the affair. But his militia, who were excessively alarmed, thought only of their own safety, and having fallen in with a part of the enemy returning from the pursuit of Wayne, they fled in confusion.

Some severe animadversions on this unfortunate affair having been made in the army, General

* The British accounts represent the American loss to have been much more considerable. It probably amounted to at least three hundred men.

Wayne

Wayne demanded a court martial, which, after investigating his conduct, was unanimously of opinion, that he had done every thing to be expected from an active, brave, and vigilant officer; and acquitted him with honour.

Having thus secured his rear, by compelling Wayne to take a greater distance, Sir William Howe marched along the valley road to the Schuylkill, and encamped on the banks of that river, extending from the Fat-land ford up to French creek, along the front of the American army. Rendered apprehensive by this movement that Howe designed to cross above him, where the river was shallow, and after turning his right flank, to get between him and Reading, where stores to a large amount were deposited, General Washington again changed his position, and marched up the river towards Pott's grove, where he encamped with his left rear, but somewhat above the right of the enemy.

Relinquishing his plan, if he had formed one, of bringing Washington to another battle, and perhaps of opinion that it would be more advantageous to transfer the seat of war to the neighbourhood of his ships, until he should have more completely broken the force opposed to him, General Howe now determined to cross the Schuylkill, and take possession of Philadelphia. In the afternoon, he ordered a detachment to cross at Fat-land ford,

which was on his right, and some time afterwards another detachment to cross at Gordon's ford, which was on his left, and to take possession of the heights commanding them. These orders were executed without much difficulty, and the American troops placed to defend those fords were easily dispersed. This service being effected, the whole army marched by the right about midnight, and crossing over at Fat-land without opposition, proceeded a considerable distance towards Philadelphia, and encamped with its left near Sweed's ford, and its right on the Monotony road, having Stony run in its front.

It was now apparent, that only an immediate victory could rescue Philadelphia from the grasp of the British general, whose present situation gave him the option of either taking possession of that place, or endeavouring to bring on another general engagement in the country at present occupied by the two armies. If, therefore, a battle must certainly be risked to save the capital, it would be necessary to attack the enemy.

Public opinion, which a military chief finds too much difficulty in resisting, and the opinion of Congress, seemed to require a second action; but on a temperate consideration of the circumstances of his army, General Washington came to the very wise and correct decision of avoiding one for the present.

His

His reasons for this decision were conclusive. Wayne and Smallwood had not yet joined the army. The continental troops ordered from Peeks-kill, who had been detained by an incursion from New York, were now approaching; and a reinforcement of militia from Jersey, under General Dickinson, was also expected.

Additional and very powerful motives forbade him now to advance on the enemy. The fatigues and sufferings of the troops had been excessive. During the active operations which had taken place since Sir William Howe had moved from the head of Elk, the army had been separated from its baggage, and was frequently without food. The soldiers had been exposed to heavy rains, without shelter, and compelled to march in deep roads, and repeatedly to ford considerable streams, without the possibility of obtaining, while cold and wet, those comforts which are found to be so all-essential to the restoration of the spirits, and the reinvigoration of the system. An army manœuvring in the face of a superior enemy, is unavoidably exposed to extreme hardships; but in the present instance, those hardships had been greatly increased by the deficiency of those supplies with which soldiers are usually furnished. Many of them had been under the necessity of performing the most severe marches without shoes, of lodging on the ground without blankets, and very often of drying their

their clothes, of which only the coat was fit for a winter campaign, without fire. These causes rendered the army unfit to make a forced march against the enemy, and determined the council of war, which was assembled on the occasion, as they had already determined the commander in chief, to remain on his present ground till the expected reinforcements should arrive, and to allow his harassed troops a few days for repose and refreshment.

Immediately after the battle of Brandywine, the distressed situation of the army had been represented to Congress, who had recommended it to the executive of Pennsylvania to appoint discreet persons to take possession of any linens, blankets, and other woollens, shoes, spirits, and other necessaries for the use of the army, which might be found in any stores or warehouses in the city of Philadelphia, giving a certificate expressing the quantity and value of the goods so taken, which goods were to be conveyed to a place of safety, to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy. The measure recommended by this resolution appeared to the executive of Pennsylvania too strong to be undertaken by them, and they advised rather that the extraordinary powers of the commander in chief should be resorted to on the occasion. In consequence of this opinion, Lieutenant-colonel Hamilton, one of the general's aids,

aids, a young gentleman already in high estimation for his talents and zeal, was employed on this interesting and delicate business. "Your own prudence," said the general in a letter to him while in Philadelphia, "will point out the least exceptionable means to be pursued; but remember, delicacy and a strict adherence to the ordinary mode of application, must give place to our necessities. We must, if possible, accommodate the soldiers with such articles as they stand in need of, or we shall have just reason to apprehend the most injurious and alarming consequences from the approaching season."

All the exertions, however, of this active officer, could not obtain a supply in any degree adequate to the pressing and increasing wants of the army.

While General Washington was making every exertion, and putting much to hazard for the defence of the metropolis, he had also taken those measures of precaution, which, should his endeavours to protect it fail, were calculated to diminish as much as possible the importance of the loss. All the military stores there collected, and the vessels at the wharfs were directed to be removed higher up the Delaware. This duty also was attended to by Colonel Hamilton. In consequence of these arrangements, very little public property fell into the hands of the enemy when they took possession of the city, which was effected, without molestation,

molestation, by Lord Cornwallis at the head of the British and Hessian grenadiers, on the twenty-sixth of September.

On the first notification of the defeat of the American army at Brandywine, Congress had fixed on Lancaster in Pennsylvania for the place of its session, in the event of being obliged to leave Philadelphia; and the condition to which the army was reduced by the rain of the sixteenth, having compelled it to move up the Schuylkill, and thus open to the enemy the way to that metropolis, the members separated on the eighteenth in the evening, and reassembled at Lancaster on the twenty-seventh of the same month.

The campaign, from the landing of the enemy at Elk ferry on the twenty-fifth of August, till they took possession of Philadelphia on the twenty-sixth of September, had been extremely active, and the part to be performed by the American general uncommonly arduous. The best English writers who have detailed the events of the war, bestow high encomiums on Sir William Howe for the military skill displayed, and the masterly movements made by him, during these operations. At Brandywine especially, Washington is supposed to have been 'out-generaled, more out-generaled than in any action during the war.' Yet let all the operations of this trying period be examined, and the means in possession of both be considered,

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and no apprehension need be entertained, that the American chief will appear in any respect inferior to his adversary, or unworthy of the high place he held in the opinions of his countrymen. With an army decidedly inferior, not only in numbers, but in every other military requisite, except courage, in an open country, in which not a single fortification was to be found, nor a river which was not, in that season of the year, fordable by infantry almost every where, he employed the enemy near thirty days in advancing about sixty miles. In this time he fought one general action, and, though defeated, was able to reassemble the same undisciplined, unclothed, and almost unfed army; and on the fifth day after his defeat, again to offer battle to the conqueror. When the armies were separated by a storm of rain, which involved him in circumstances the most distressing which can be conceived, he extricated himself from them with infinite and persevering labour, and still maintained a respectable and imposing countenance.

The only advantage which he is supposed to have given the enemy, was at the battle of Brandywine, and that was produced by the contrariety and uncertainty of the intelligence received. Had the main body of the enemy been at Chadd's ford, and that which took the circuit under Lord Cornwallis been a small party, detached to draw his attention and his force to a point where only a feint

was

was designed, the loss of the day might have been occasioned by the very measures which a perfect knowledge of the real intentions of the enemy would have dictated. In such circumstances the general must be governed by his intelligence, and take his measures according to the information he receives. It is his duty to obtain correct information; and among the most important traits of a military character, is the skill to select those means which will obtain it. Yet the best chosen means are not always successful; and in a new army, where military talent has not been proved by the standard of experience, the general, is peculiarly exposed to the chance of not employing the best instruments. In a country covered with woods too, precise information of the numbers composing different columns is with difficulty to be gained.

It has also been said, "that the Americans do not appear to have made all the use that might be expected of the advantages which the country afforded for harassing and impeding the progress of the British army."

Yet it is to be recollected, that General Smallwood was directed, with the militia of Maryland and Delaware, and some continental troops, to hang on the rear of the enemy, and harass them as much as should be found practicable: that General Maxwell, with a corps of light infantry, consisting

sisting of a thousand men, was ordered to take every occasion to annoy him on his march: that General Wayne with his division was afterwards detached to unite with Smallwood, and command the whole force collected in the rear, which would have been very respectable.

If the militia did not assemble in the numbers expected, or effect the wished-for service, their failure is not attributable to any defect of exertion on the part of General Washington, who had been early and energetic in his calls on them; nor did the state of his army admit of detaching from it additional numbers of his continental troops, to supply the place they had been designed to fill.

General Maxwell was much complained of by his officers, and a court of inquiry sat upon his conduct, the result of which was his entire acquittal. Whether that officer omitted to seize the proper occasions to annoy the enemy, or the cautious and compact movements of General Howe, at all times remarkable for his attention to the lives of his soldiers by guarding carefully against any skirmish which was avoidable, afforded none, cannot easily be ascertained. General Washington felt the loss of Morgan, and wrote pressingly to Gates, after his successes against Burgoyne, to restore to him, as soon as possible, that officer with his regiment of riflemen.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER IV.

Measures taken to prevent a Communication between the British Army in Philadelphia and their Fleet—Royal Army attacked at Germantown—The Americans repulsed—Measures taken by General Washington for cutting off Supplies from Philadelphia—Attack on Fort Mifflin—Attack on Red Bank—Colonel Donop killed, and his Party repulsed with considerable Loss—The Augusta British Ship blown up—Fort Mifflin evacuated, and Possession taken by the British—Fort Mercer evacuated—A Piquet of the Enemy attacked, and driven in with Loss—The Enemy succeed in opening a free Communication with the Fleet—Attempt by General Dickinson to surprise Skinner's Brigade.

IT having been at length determined no longer to oppose the entrance of the enemy into Philadelphia, the first attention of the American general was immediately directed towards disabling Sir William Howe from holding that place, by rendering the passage of the Delaware up to it impracticable.

With

With this design, the Americans* had erected works and batteries upon a flat, low, marshy island, or rather a bank of mud and sand, which had been accumulated in the Delaware near the junction of the Schuylkill, and which, from its nature, was called Mud, but from these defences, Fort island. On the opposite shore of New Jersey, at a place called Red bank, they had also constructed a fort or redoubt, well covered with heavy artillery. In the deep navigable channel, between or under cover of these batteries, they had sunk several ranges of frames, to which, from the resemblance in construction, they had given the name of chevaux de frieze, being composed of transverse beams, firmly united, pointed in various directions, and strongly headed with iron. These were of such a weight and strength, and sunk in such a depth of water, as rendered them equally difficult to be weighed or cut through, and destructive to any ship which had the misfortune of striking against them. No attempt for raising them, or for opening the channel in any manner, could, however, be made, until the command of the shores on both sides was fully obtained.

About † three miles lower down the river they had sunk other ranges of these frames, and were constructing for their protection some consider-

* Ann. Reg. † Ibid.

able and extensive works, which, though not yet finished, were in such forwardness as to be provided with artillery, and to command their object, at a place on the Jersey side called Billing's point. These works and frames were further supported by several gallies mounting heavy cannon; together with two floating batteries, a number of armed vessels and small craft of various kinds, and some fire ships.

It had been impracticable for the commander in chief to attend personally to these works, and they were entirely incomplete. The present relative situation of the armies, gave him a decisive importance. If they could be maintained, they cut off the communication of General Howe with his fleet, and prevented his receiving supplies by water. The American vessels in the river above fort Mifflin, the name given to the fort on Mud island, rendered it extremely difficult for him to forage in Jersey, or to draw any provisions from that state. General Washington, with the continental army, hoped to be able so to cut off his supplies on the side of Pennsylvania, as to compel him, in a short time, to evacuate Philadelphia.

In execution of this plan, the Baron d'Arendt, a German officer of experience, was selected for the command of fort Mifflin; but he being disabled by sickness from engaging in this service, the command devolved on Lieutenant-colonel Samuel Smith,

Smith, of Maryland, who had been detached thither with between two and three hundred continental troops; and measures were taken to expedite, as much as possible, the march of the reinforcements expected both from the north and south.

The advantages to be derived from this situation were considerably diminished by the capture of the Delaware frigate, the largest then in the river above fort Mifflin.

The day after Lord Cornwallis had entered Philadelphia, three batteries were commenced for the purpose of acting against any American shipping which might appear before the town. Before their completion, they were attacked by two frigates, assisted by several gallies and gondolas. The Delaware, being left by the tide while engaged with the battery, grounded, and was obliged to strike; soon after which, the smaller frigate and the other vessels retired under the guns of the fort. This circumstance was rendered material by its giving the enemy the entire command of the ferry, and consequently free access to the Jersey shore, while it intercepted the communication between the forts below and Trenton, from whence their garrisons were to have been supplied with military stores.

All the reinforcements which had been expected, except the state regiment and militia from Virginia, were now arrived. They consisted of about

nine hundred continental troops from Peeks-kill, under General Macdougal, about six hundred militia from Jersey under General Foreman (General Dickinson having been detained by the apprehension of a second invasion from York), and about eleven hundred from Maryland under General Smallwood. All the detached parties being called in, the present strength of the army in rank and file, fit for duty, amounted to eight thousand continental troops, and three thousand militia. With this force it was determined to approach the enemy, encamp within about twelve miles of them, and seize the first favourable moment to attack them. In consequence of this determination, the army took a position on the Skippac road, about twenty miles from Philadelphia, and sixteen from German town. This is a long village stretching on both sides the great road to the northward, which forms a continued street nearly two miles in length. The * line of encampment of the British army crossed this village at right angles, somewhat to the south of the centre, the left wing extending on the west, from the town to the Schuylkill. That wing was covered in front and flank by the mounted and dismounted German chasseurs. A battalion of light infantry, and the queen's American rangers, were in the front of the right; and the

* Ann. Reg.

fortieth

fortieth regiment, with another battalion of light infantry, were posted at the head of the village. Lord Cornwallis, with four regiments of grenadiers, was in Philadelphia.

The object to which the attention of General Howe was now most particularly directed, was the security of his late acquisition, by removing the obstructions in the river, and thereby opening a free communication with the fleet. A few ships of war were already in the Delaware, lying off Chester, and Captain Hammond, who commanded one of them, represented, that the possession of the fort at Billing's point, which was feebly garrisoned, would enable him to raise the lower line of obstructions, so as to allow a passage for the fleet up the river to the fort on Mud island.

Colonel Stirling, with two regiments, was detached to take possession of the fort at Billing's point, which he accomplished without opposition. On his approach, the garrison, which was entirely of militia, having spiked their artillery, and set fire to the barracks, withdrew without firing a gun. This service being effected, and the works facing the water entirely destroyed, so that the attempt to cut away and weigh up the obstructions to the passage of vessels up the river could no longer be impeded by the fire from the fort, Colonel Stirling returned to Chester, from whence he was directed to escort a large convoy of provisions to

Philadelphia. Entertaining some apprehensions for the safety of this convoy, another regiment was detached from German town to Philadelphia, in order to proceed next day to Chester, and join Colonel Stirling.*

This division of the force of the enemy did not pass unobserved. It appeared to Washington to furnish a fair opportunity, which he determined promptly to seize, of giving Sir William Howe a blow, which, if successful to its utmost extent, might, in his present state of separation from the fleet, ruin his army, and very possibly decide the fate of the war.

It was proposed, if practicable, to surprise the camp at German town, and to attack both wings in front and rear at the same instant.

The divisions of Sullivan and Wayne, flanked by Conway's brigade, were to enter the town by the way of Chesnut hill, and to attack the left wing; while General Armstrong, with the Pennsylvania militia, was to fall down the Manatawney road, by Vandeering's mill, and, turning the left flank, to attack the rear.

The divisions of Greene and Stephen, flanked by Macdougal's brigade, were to take a circuit by the way of the lime-kiln road, and, entering the town at the market-house, attack their right wing.

* Ann. Reg. Stedman.

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The militia of Maryland and Jersey, under Generals Smallwood and Foreman, were to march down the old York road, and, turning their right, to fall upon its rear.

The division of Lord Stirling, and the brigades of Nash and Maxwell, were to form a corps de reserve.

Parties of cavalry were silently to scour the roads, to prevent observation, and to keep up the communication between the heads of the different columns.

The necessary arrangements being made, the army moved from its ground about seven o'clock in the evening. About sunrise the next morning, the advance of the column * led by Sullivan, which was drawn from Conway's brigade, encountered, and drove in a piquet placed at Mount Airy, or Mr. Allan's house. The main body followed close upon them, and engaging the light infantry and the fortieth regiment, posted at the head of the village, soon forced them to give way, leaving all their baggage behind them. Though closely pursued, Lieutenant-colonel Musgrave found means to throw himself, with six companies of the fortieth regiment, into a large store-house belonging to a Mr. Chew, directly in the way of the Americans, from which they were very

* The commander in chief accompanied this column.

severely galled by a heavy and constant fire of musquetry kept up from the doors and windows. Some ineffectual attempts were made to storm this house, in which great loss was sustained; after which the brigade engaged with Colonel Musgrave drew off some distance, and brought up a field piece, which played on it without making any impression. This circumstance broke the line of the right wing; and, added to the darkness occasioned by a fog of uncommon thickness, threw it into great confusion.

In about half an hour after Sullivan had been engaged, the column led by Greene arrived on its ground, and commenced an attack on the light infantry which was posted in front of the right wing of the enemy. It was at first successful, and after driving in the piquets, forced the battalion of light infantry also to give way.

Every thing as yet had succeeded to the utmost expectation of General Washington, and the prospect of victory was extremely flattering. The attack had been made with great spirit; several brigades had penetrated into the town; there was much reason to believe, that a separation of the two wings of the British army would be effected, and that they would be entirely routed. Had his troops possessed the advantages given by experience; had every division performed precisely the part allotted to it; there is yet much reason

to

to believe that his most sanguine hopes would have been realised. But the face of the country, and the extreme darkness of the morning, co-operating with the want of discipline in the army, blasted all the flattering appearances of the moment, and defeated an enterprise which promised in its commencement the most happy and brilliant result.

The country through which the enemy was pursued, abounded with strong and small enclosures, which every where broke the line of the advancing army. The darkness of the morning rendered it difficult to distingush objects, even at an inconsiderable distance; and it was impossible for the commander in chief to learn the situation of the whole, or to correct the confusion which was commencing. The brigades were soon thrown into disorder. Some of the regiments pursuing with vivacity, while others endeavoured to proceed more circumspectly, they were entirely separated from each other, so that their weight was broken and their effect very much weakened. The same cause which facilitated the separation of the regiments, prevented their discerning the real situation of the enemy. They consequently did not improve their first impression, nor direct their efforts to the best advantage. The right of the left wing got so out of its course, as to be entangled with Chew's house, on one side of which it stopped, while a brigade of Sullivan's was engaged

gaged on the other. The attacks on the flanks and rear do not appear ever to have been made. The Pennsylvania militia came in view of the chasseurs, who flanked the left of the British line, but did not engage them closely. The Maryland and Jersey militia just shewed themselves on the right flank, about the time Greene's column was commencing a retreat.

These embarrassments, arising entirely from circumstances which would have been overcome by experienced troops, gave the enemy time to recover from the consternation into which they had at first been thrown. General Knyphausen, who commanded their left, detached one battalion to support the chasseurs, and part of the third and fourth brigades under Generals Grey and Agnew, to attack the front of the column led by Sullivan, which had penetrated far into the village, while its left was detained at Chew's house. Some corps from both their right and left attacked the regiments which had penetrated furthest into German town, where a part of Mahlenberg's and another brigade were surrounded and made prisoners. The different broken parts mistook each other for the enemy; and while a part of Sullivan's division was very warmly engaged, and sanguine hopes of victory were yet entertained, the main body of the army began to retreat.

Great efforts were made to rally the American troops

troops when this retrograde movement first commenced, but they were ineffectual. A general confusion prevailed, and the confidence felt in the commencement of the action was entirely lost. With infinite chagrin General Washington was compelled to relinquish the victory he had thought within his grasp, and turn his attention to the security of his army. The enemy not having yet recovered sufficiently to endanger his rear, otherwise than by their artillery, the retreat was made without loss.

In this battle, about two hundred Americans were killed, and near three times that number wounded. The most considerable mischief was done from Chew's house, and in German town, where, the regiments which had separated from their brigades, suffered severely before they surrendered. About four hundred were made prisoners. Among the killed was General Nash of North Carolina, who fell at the head of his brigade; and among the prisoners was Colonel Mathews of Virginia, whose regiment had penetrated into the centre of the town, and made a large number of prisoners, when they were surrounded and obliged to surrender.

The loss of the enemy, as stated in the official report of General Howe, was but little more than five hundred in killed and wounded, of whom less than one hundred were killed. Among the lat-

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ter was Brigadier-general Agnew, and Colonel Bird.

The grenadiers who had been in Philadelphia under Lord Cornwallis, hastened on the first alarm to the support of their brethren. They ran the whole distance, and reached the field of battle almost breathless and exhausted, just as the action terminated.*

The American army retreated the same day about twenty miles to Perkyomi creek, where it was permitted to take rest and refreshment, and where it received a small reinforcement of fifteen hundred militia, and a state regiment from Virginia; after which, it again advanced a few miles towards the enemy, and encamped once more on Skippac creek.

The plan of the battle of German town must be admitted to have been judiciously formed, and in its commencement to have been happily conducted. Although General Howe, in his official letter, states intelligence of the approach of the American army to have been received about three o'clock in the morning, yet there is reason to believe, that only† small parties of observation could have been expected, and that the meditated surprise was

* Ann. Reg. Stedman.

† It is probable that only the Pennsylvania militia, who were rather earlier on their ground than the other columns, were discovered.

complete.

complete. The camp, part of which was traversed by several American regiments, furnished strong evidence of this fact; and it is rendered the more probable by the circumstances attending the march of the reinforcement from Philadelphia. But to have given the plan success, it was necessary that those entrusted with the execution of its several parts should have adhered strictly to it. It was also necessary that the utmost vigilance should have been used to prevent the breaking and separating of the different brigades from each other, and to preserve the smaller parts entire, a duty of great importance, the performance of which was rendered extremely difficult by the numerous inclosures to be passed, and the thickness of the fog.

Major-general Stephen, who commanded the right of the left wing, was cashiered for misconduct on the retreat, and for intoxication. No inquiries appear to have been made into the conduct of other general officers.

Congress expressed in very decided terms their approbation both of the plan of this enterprise, and the courage with which it was executed; for which their thanks were given to the general, and the army.

Immediately after the battle of Brandywine, the state of Jersey had been requested to furnish the army with reinforcements of its militia; and General Putnam had been ordered to detach fifteen hundred

hundred continental troops to cover the Jerseys, and an equal number to join the army. The militia of Connecticut were relied on to maintain the very important posts up the North river, which, in consequence of these heavy draughts, were left but weakly defended.

These troops were detained some time in Jersey for the defence of that state, which was threatened from New York.

Sir Henry Clinton, who commanded in New York, hearing that General Howe had landed at the head of the Chesapeak, readily conjectured that an alarm from the troops under his direction, might be useful both to Howe and Burgoyne, by arresting for a time those aids which might be furnished to Washington, or Gates, from the north of the Delaware. With this view, he entered the Jerseys with about three thousand men, in two divisions, the one commanded by General Vaughan, and the other by General Campbell. They crossed at Elizabeth town point, and at fort Lee, and united not far from the new bridge above Hackensac. They encountered very little opposition, and collected on their way a considerable quantity of fresh provisions. About the fifteenth, the continental troops from Pecks-kill, under General Macdougal, approached them, and General Dickinson, with very great exertions, was assembling the Jersey militia. On receiving intelligence of

of the force collecting to oppose him, Sir Henry Clinton returned to New York and Staten island, with the cattle he had collected, having lost in this excursion only eight men killed, and twice as many wounded.

After it was ascertained that Clinton had evacuated Jersey, General Macdougal continued his march towards the Delaware, and the utmost exertions were made, both by Governor Livingston and General Dickinson, to collect a strong body of militia for the purpose of aiding the army in Pennsylvania. The success of these exertions, however, by no means equalled the wishes of those who made them. The militia, accustomed to judge for themselves, were of opinion, that there was danger of a second invasion from New York, and that their services were more essentially necessary on their eastern frontier than to the westward. They assembled, therefore, slowly and reluctantly. About five or six hundred crossed the Delaware at Philadelphia, about the time the enemy had crossed the Schuylkill, and were employed in the removal of stores. As the British army approached Philadelphia, they were directed to avoid it by moving up the Frankfort road; but the commanding officer having, without apprehension of danger, separated himself from his corps, was taken by a small party of the British light horse employed in scouring the country; on which the regiment dispersed,

dispersed, and made its way, by different roads, back again to Jersey. With much labour General Dickinson had collected two other corps amounting to nine hundred men, with whom he was about to cross the Delaware, when intelligence was received of the arrival at New York of a reinforcement from Europe. It was deemed by the government of that state, indispensable to its safety, that he should remain for its defence. He returned, therefore, from Trenton towards Elizabeth town, and the militia designed to serve in Pennsylvania, were directed to march under General Foreman. About six hundred of them reached the army a few days before the battle of German town. Immediately after that action, they were permitted to return, their impatience to do which was greatly increased by hearing that the enemy was reinforced in New York.

The object which now principally engaged the attention of both armies, was the forts on the Delaware. It was apparent that, without obtaining them, General Howe would be compelled to evacuate Philadelphia, and thus abandon the great object of the campaign. His whole force would of consequence be exerted to possess them. General Washington was equally anxious to preserve them, but could not spare from his army, a force entirely adequate to their defence.

The loss of the Delaware frigate, and Billing's point,

point, greatly discouraged the seamen with whom the gallies and floating batteries were manned, and whose services were indispensable to the protection of the obstructions in the river. Believing all to be lost, an opinion increased by the intelligence received from their connections in Philadelphia, the most alarming defection prevailed among them, and several officers, as well as sailors, went over to the enemy. This desponding temper was a good deal checked by the affair at German town, and by throwing a garrison of continental troops into the fort at Red bank, called fort Mercer, the defence of which had hitherto been trusted to militia, but in which Colonel Greene, of Rhode island, with his regiment was now placed. This fort commanded the channel between the Jersey shore and Mud island, and the American vessels lay securely under its guns, from whence they could sally out on the enemy whenever the occasion should require it. The fort at Red bank required an additional number of men for its defence, and the militia of Jersey were relied on to furnish them. It was also important to form a body of men which should overawe and harass the rear of any detachment which might be employed in the investment of the place, and this corps too could only be supplied by New Jersey.

The present garrisons of Mud island and Red bank, though not sufficiently numerous, being

composed of troops on whom great dependence could be placed, it was supposed that, through the aid of the obstructions in the river, and the co-operation of the marine force, they might be defended for some time against the utmost efforts of the enemy. To give to the exertions of the vessels the effect expected from them, and of which they were capable, it was necessary to supply the places of the seamen who had deserted, and for this purpose, immediate draughts were directed to be made from the continental regiments, of those who were fitted for that service; and General Washington also requested that some unfinished frigates, and other vessels which were lying up the river, might be sunk. This would prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy, who might use them against the fort and fleet, and, at the same time, would liberate their crews, who might be employed in the American vessels which were in actual service.

These dispositions for the defence of the river being made, the next object was to render the situation of General Howe in Philadelphia as inconvenient and embarrassing as possible, by restraining his intercourse with the country, and cutting off the supplies designed for his army. With this view, the American general detached about six hundred militia over the Schuylkill under General Potter, with orders to watch the country

country between that river and Chester, so as to prevent the inhabitants from going with their provisions to the market of Philadelphia, and to cut off small foraging parties of the enemy, which might be sent out to obtain supplies for the relief of those wants which began to be felt by their army. He was also ordered to give notice of any large detachment which might cross the Schuylkill, and to inform himself of the numbers and position of the force stationed at Wilmington, against which post an enterprise was meditated.

The militia of the counties on the Delaware above Philadelphia was also directed to watch the roads in that part of the country, so as to intercept those persons who were indifferent to whom their provisions were sold, provided payment was received in specie.

To render more effectual the exertions of the army, to stop those who were seduced by the hope of gold and silver to aid the enemy at this critical time, Congress passed a resolution subjecting to martial law, and to death, all those who should furnish them with provisions, or certain other aids enumerated in the resolution, and who should be taken within thirty miles of any city, town, or place in Jersey, Pennsylvania, or Delaware, which was in possession of the enemy.

These arrangements being made, to cut off as much as possible all supplies from the country,

General Washington, on the 16th of October, re-occupied the ground from which he had marched to fight the battle of Germantown, in the hope of restraining the operations of the enemy against the forts; or if, he should fail in that object, of being enabled either again to attack them, while weakened by parties detached on that service, or to fall in with such parties as might be found most advisable.

In the mean time, General Howe was active in his preparations to attack fort Mifflin from the Pennsylvania shore. Some batteries were erected at the mouth of the Schuylkill, in order to command Webb's ferry, which were attacked by Commodore Hazlewood and silenced; but the next night, a detachment of the enemy crossed over Webb's ferry into Province island, on which they erected a redoubt opposite fort Mifflin, within two musket shots of the block-house, from which, as no sufficient works had been erected for defence on that quarter, they were enabled to throw shot and shells directly into the barracks. Daylight discovered this redoubt, and three gallies, with a floating battery, were immediately ordered by Commodore Hazlewood, who commanded the fleet, to attack it. Their fire was so well supported that the garrison surrendered. While the boats were bringing the prisoners off the island, a large body of the enemy was seen marching into the

the redoubt. A fire was immediately commenced on them from fort Mifflin, during which, several of those who had surrendered escaped, and were received by their friends, who were now again in possession of the redoubt. The number of prisoners actually brought off in the boats were two subalterns, and fifty-six privates.

The attack on the redoubt was renewed, but without success; and two attempts made by Lieutenant-colonel Smith to storm it failed. The garrison of fort Mifflin being much annoyed by the fire from the redoubt, General Washington directed new covers, in a place of greater security, to be erected for the troops; and the meadow banks, from the mouth of the Schuylkill up to the mouth of Hollanders creek, to be cut in several places, so as to inundate the adjacent ground, and stop the progress of the works the enemy were raising. But the garrison was not sufficient to effect this service, and the commodore had too little confidence in the seamen to trust them on shore. In a few nights, the enemy constructed a long breastwork on the high ground of the island which enfiladed the principal battery, and rendered it necessary to throw up some cover on the platform, to protect the men who worked the guns.

The aids expected by the garrison from the Jersey militia were not received. "Assure yourself," said Lieutenant-colonel Smith, in a letter

pressing earnestly for a reinforcement of continental troops, "that no dependence is to be put on the militia; whatever men your excellency determines on sending, no time is to be lost." The garrison of fort Mifflin was now reduced to one hundred and fifty-six effectives, and that of Red bank did not much exceed two hundred.

In consequence of these representations, it was determined to send a reinforcement of continental troops to both forts. Colonel Angell, with his regiment from Rhode island, was ordered to Red bank, and Lieutenant-colonel John Greene, of Virginia, with about two hundred men of his regiment, was ordered to fort Mifflin. The Baron D'Arendt, whose service in Europe led to the opinion that he possessed some considerable skill in the art of defending fortified places, and who had now recovered his health, was directed to repair to the latter fort, and take command of it.

The general appears to have felt some apprehension that this order might wound Lieutenant-colonel Smith, who had heretofore conducted the defence of the place. In his letter, communicating the intelligence of the reinforcement sent under Lieutenant-colonel Greene, and the arrangement relative to the commanding officer, he says, "Colonel D'Arendt having now recovered from his indisposition, will, this day, proceed to fort Mifflin, to take the command there, agreeably to my

my first intention. Your conduct, since you have been vested with it, has been such as to merit my entire approbation; and I am assured it will continue to be such as will finally preserve to you an equal claim to it. Colonel D'Arendt's knowledge and experience in war fully entitle him to the confidence of every officer and man under his command." Lieutenant-colonel Smith, however, desired leave to rejoin his regiment; but on receiving an answer to that request, in which the commander in chief, after stating the difficulty of sending the necessary reinforcements without an officer of superior rank, and that he was induced by that circumstance, and not by a wish to supersede him, whose conduct he approved, to order Colonel D'Arendt on that service, left it in his choice to continue in the fort or rejoin his corps. These explanations, added to the ill health of Colonel D'Arendt, which obliged him to retire for a few days from the unwholesome damps of Mud island to Red bank, determined Lieutenant-colonel Smith to remain in fort Mifflin.

Immediately after the battle of Brandywine, Admiral Howe, who supposed the army to be unquestionably secured, by that event, from any circumstance which could render the immediate aid of the fleet essential to its safety, sailed for the Delaware, where he expected to arrive in time to meet and co-operate with the land forces in and

about Philadelphia. But the winds were so unfavourable, and the navigation of the bay of Delaware so difficult, that his van did not get into the river till the fourth of October. The ships of war and transports which followed, and which came up from the sixth to the eighth, anchored from Newcastle to Reedy island.

The frigates in advance of the fleet had not as yet succeeded in their endeavours to effect a passage for the ships through the lower double row of chevaux de frieze. Though no longer protected by the fort at Billing's point, they were defended by the water force above, and the work was found to be more difficult than had been expected. Although the scarcity of ammunition restrained, in some degree, the fire from the gallies and floating batteries, it was not till about the middle of October that the impediments were in part removed, so as to afford a narrow and intricate passage through them up to the forts. In the mean time, the attack from the Pennsylvania shore had not produced all the effect expected from it, and it was perceived that greater exertions would be necessary for the reduction of the works, than could safely be made in the present relative situation of the armies. Under this impression, General Howe, soon after the American army had returned to its old camp on Skippac, retired from German town, and concentered his troops in Philadelphia.

This movement was preparatory to a combined attack by land and water on forts Mercer and Mifflin, which had been agreed on by the admiral and general.

After effecting a passage through the works sunk in the river at Billing's point, other difficulties still remained to be encountered by the ships of war. Several rows of chevaux de frieze had been sunk about half a mile below Mud island, which were protected by the guns of forts Mifflin and Mercer, as well as by the moveable water force, so that to raise the frames and clear the channel was impracticable, without having first taken the forts.

On the 21st of October, Colonel Count Donop, a German officer who had gained great reputation in the course of the war, crossed the Delaware at Cooper's ferry opposite Philadelphia, at the head of a detachment of Hessians, consisting, besides light infantry and chasseurs, of three battalions of grenadiers and the regiment of Mirbach, amounting to about twelve hundred men, in order to proceed next day to the attack of the fort at Red bank.

It was a part of the plan that, so soon as the attack should be made by Colonel Count Donop, a heavy cannonade on fort Mifflin should commence from the batteries on the Pennsylvania shore, and that the Vigilant, a ship of war, should

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pass through a narrow and very confined channel between Hog island, next below Mud island, and the Pennsylvania shore, so as to attack the fort in the rear. Meanwhile, to divert the attention of the garrison, and of the marine force from the Vigilant, and from other more serious attacks, the advanced frigates, together with the Isis and Augusta, were to approach fort Mifflin in front, up the main channel, as far as the impediments in it would admit, and from thence batter the works.

The fortifications at Red bank consisted of extensive outworks, within which was an intrenchment eight or nine feet high, boarded and fraized, on which Colonel Greene, after taking command of the place, had bestowed a great deal of labour. Late in the evening of the 22d, Count Donop appeared before the fort, and attacked it with great intrepidity. It was defended with great resolution. The outworks being too extensive to be manned by the force under Colonel Greene, which did not exceed five hundred men, were only used to gall the enemy while advancing, and on their near approach were abandoned by the garrison, who retired within the inner intrenchment, from whence they kept up against the Hessians, who pressed on with great gallantry, a most heavy and destructive fire. Colonel Donop, while leading on his troops, received a mortal wound, and Lieutenant-colonel Mingerode, the second

second in command, fell about the same time. Lieutenant-colonel Linsing, now the oldest remaining officer of the detachment, drew off his troops, and being favoured by the darkness of the night, collected as many of the wounded as could be brought off. He marched about five miles that night, and returned next day to Philadelphia. In this unsuccessful expedition, according to the best information which could be collected, the enemy lost about four hundred men. The garrison, which was reinforced from fort Mifflin, and aided by the gallies which flanked the enemy both advancing and retreating, having fought under cover, lost only thirty-two men killed and wounded. It would appear from the statement given by General Howe of this enterprise, that the inner works could not be carried without scaling ladders, and that Colonel Donop had not been furnished with them. Had the requisitions of the commander in chief been complied with, and a camp been formed at a convenient distance by the Jersey militia, so as to have fallen on the rear of the assailants, it is probable that this whole corps might have been destroyed.

In order to be in readiness to perform the part assigned to the navy, the Augusta, a sixty-four gun ship, with four other small vessels, passed the lower line of chevaux de frieze, opposite to Billing's point, and lay above them, waiting the assault

sault to be made on the fort from the land. The flood-tide setting in about the time the attack commenced, they slipped their cables, and moved with it up the river. The obstructions which had been sunk in the river, had in some degree changed its channel, so that the Augusta and the Merlin grounded a considerable distance below the second line of chevaux de frieze, and a strong northerly wind which had prevented the Vigilant from coming up to the station assigned her, still continuing, so checked the rising of the tide, that these vessels could not be floated by the subsequent flood. Their situation, however, was not discovered that evening. The frigates approached the fort as near as possible, against which they kept up an incesssant fire. The batteries from the Pennsylvania shore also, were opened on the garrison, but night soon put an end to the cannonade. Very early next morning it was recommenced, in the hope that, under cover of the fire from the vessels and from the batteries, the Augusta and the Merlin might be got off. It was soon discovered that they were on ground, and four fire ships were sent against them, but without effect. Meanwhile, a very warm cannonade was continued on both sides, in the course of which the Augusta took fire, and it was found impossible to extinguish the flames. In this state of things, it became necessary to take out the men, and to withdraw the frigates, to prevent the

the injury they might sustain when she should blow up. This being in a great measure effected, and the Merlin, which could not be removed, being set on fire, the Augusta blew up, and in her were lost a few of the crew, among whom were a lieutenant, Baldock, and the chaplain and gunner. For their continuance in the vessel no reason has been assigned.

The repulse of the detachment commanded by Count Donop, inspired Congress with the most flattering hopes respecting the permanent defence of the posts on the Delaware. That body expressed its high sense of the merits of Colonel Greene, who had commanded in fort Mercer, of Lieutenant-colonel Smith, who had commanded in fort Mifflin, and of Commodore Hazlewood, who commanded the gallies; and to each of these officers an elegant sword was presented, as a mark of the estimation in which his services were held by the public.

The evacuation of German town by the British so immediately after General Washington had re-occupied his old camp on Skippac creek, having rendered that position too remote to be any longer eligible, the American army advanced to the White marsh, within fifteen miles of Philadelphia.

The objects of the commander in chief were still the same. He counted on enfeebling, in some degree, the operations of the enemy against the forts

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on the Delaware, on fighting them, if he could do so to advantage, and on restraining their foraging parties, and cutting off their supplies from the country. His parties of light-horse, who with indefatigable vigilance watched their motions, gave him early intelligence of all their movements. On being informed that Count Donop had crossed over into Jersey, he could not conceive that his design was to carry Red bank by storm, but supposed that he intended to invest it, and to force the garrison by regular approaches and bombardment to capitulate. Immediate measures were taken to raise, if possible, the militia of New Jersey, in order to form such a force in his rear as would disable him from prosecuting the siege; but they had been already so harassed by repeated calls during the invasion of their own state, and were still drawn so frequently from their homes, for the purpose of guarding their eastern frontier, in defending which they felt a more immediate interest, that it was found impracticable to bring a sufficient number of men into the field* to derive from their services any essential advantage.

* The usual difficulty of obtaining the service of the militia, was at this time very much increased, by an event by no means common. The time for which the governor was elected had expired, and no new election had been made. The late executive, therefore, did not think itself authorized to take any measures as an executive, and had not General Dickinson ventured to order out the militia by his own authority, they could not have been put in motion.

While the dispositions of the American army were such as to embarrass as much as possible the communication of the enemy with the country, it was essentially important to the present views of the commander in chief to intercept all supplies coming from their ships. This was rendered extremely difficult, by the present position of the British army. They were in possession of the Schuylkill, the mouth of which was commanded by their batteries, and over which they had thrown a bridge. They were also in possession of Province and Carpenters islands, on each of which a body of troops was stationed. Boats laden with provisions could deposit their cargoes opposite the chevaux de frieze, from whence they were conveyed through the islands to Philadelphia. Thus was their intercourse with the fleet kept up, which, though precarious and difficult, yet greatly relieved them. An intercourse between the vessels and the rich country below Chester and Wilmington was maintained, nor was it practicable to destroy it, while its preservation was wished by the inhabitants themselves. To this mode of communication, the commander in chief in part directed his attention. General Potter, a very vigilant and judicious officer, who commanded a small body of militia on the south of the Schuylkill, first discovered the passage of several parties by this route, and Captain Lee, of the cavalry, who had already greatly

greatly distinguished himself by his activity as a partisan, and by the accuracy of his intelligence, was directed to cross the Schuylkill, and obtain correct information of the position of the enemy in that quarter, of the force of their several stations, and of the exact route which was pursued by the convoys from the fleet to Philadelphia. This service he accomplished soon after engaging in it.

Being possessed of the necessary information, General Potter was directed to remove at one time, and with the utmost secrecy, all the running stones from the mills in the neighbourhood of Chester, and on the Brandywine, in order to prevent supplies of flour from that source; and a strong detachment of militia was ordered to his assistance, for the purpose of enabling him to break up the waggon road along which the convoys of provisions had passed. The service concerning the mills was executed by Captain Lee, who at the same time captured a small foraging party about twelve miles below Chester.

The situation of the forts still continued extremely critical. That on Mud island had been wretchedly constructed, and required, in the opinion of the commandant, and of Major Fleury, a very excellent officer belonging to the French service, who was engaged as an engineer, and was employed in the defence of it, at least eight hundred

dred men, fully to man the lines in case of an assault, to which it was greatly exposed. Mud island is about half a mile in length. At the lower end of it was placed fort Mifflin, having its principal fortifications in front, for the purpose of repelling ships coming up the river. The defences in the rear consisted only of a ditch and palisades, protected by two block-houses, the upper story of one of which had been destroyed in the late cannonade. Above the fort were two batteries, opposing those constructed by the enemy on Province and Carpenters islands, both of which were in their possession, and were separated from Mud island only by a narrow passage, between four and five hundred yards wide. This passage was in a great degree commanded by the English batteries. They had driven out of it the moveable water force, which had been originally relied on for security from that quarter. In addition to this, that force found itself compelled in rough weather to take shelter under the high bank on the Jersey shore.

The vessels of war engaged in the defence of the Delaware, were partly continental, and partly in the service of the state of Pennsylvania, under a commodore, who held his commission from the latter. A misunderstanding prevailed between the commodore and Lieutenant-colonel Smith, who commanded the garrison at fort Mifflin, and also between the commodore and the officers of the

navy in continental service. Colonel Smith required that guard boats and gallies should be continually stationed in the channel, between the fort and the enemy, which the commodore frequently refused.

That garrison consisted only of three hundred continental troops, a number insufficient to place a single line round the works. They were in perpetual apprehension lest in the nights, the darkness of which was greatly increased by thick fogs, the enemy should pass over in boats from Province island, and filling up the ditch with fascines, carry the place by a coup de main, or take possession of the upper part of the island, and from thence batter down the slight defence which covered them in that direction.

The authority and exertions of the commander in chief were necessary to prevent the differences between the officers from essentially injuring the service; and to induce Commodore Hazlewood to make such a disposition of his little fleet as would best cover fort Mifflin from the real danger with which it was threatened. It was readily to be conjectured, that if an attack from the islands should be meditated, the attention of the vessels would be called from that quarter by an attempt from below on the chevaux de frieze.—To prevent the mischief which might thus be occasioned, the general earnestly requested that he would

would never permit himself to lose sight of the passage from Province to Mud island, but that he would continually station a part of his fleet in such a manner as immediately to act with the most effect on any body of troops attempting that passage. This important duty he conceived might be attended to with the less hazard to other parts of the service, because the solidity of the obstructions in the river was such, that a few red-hot balls from a part of the flotilla judiciously posted, would be sufficient to protect the chevaux de frieze, while the danger from the islands should continue.

Finding the difficulties of drawing the militia of Jersey to the Delaware to be so great, that the exertions of Generals Dickinson and Foreman could not surmount them, it was determined to strengthen the garrison still further from the continental army. Three hundred Pennsylvania militia were detached to be divided between the two forts; and a few days afterwards General Varnum with his brigade, was ordered to take a position about Woodbury, near Red bank, and to relieve and reinforce the garrisons of both forts, as far as his strength would permit, and the necessity of their situation should require. General Foreman, with such militia as he could bring into the field, was directed to join him; and the hope was entertained, that so respectable a continental

force would induce the militia to assemble in greater numbers. Sixteen hundred men had now been detached on this service, and a larger force could not be spared from the army, without hazarding its safety too much.

It was not from the opposite shore alone that danger to fort Mifflin was apprehended. The enemy being in possession of the river above, it was greatly feared that preparations were making at Philadelphia, to proceed down the Delaware, and by attacking the upper part of Mud island, to facilitate the operations which might be meditated from Province and Carpenters islands. To guard as much as possible against these dangers, the flotilla was again reinforced by seamen drawn from the army, and great exertions were used in cutting the banks, so as to inundate the grounds on the islands occupied by the enemy, and to embarrass all their plans. Directions were also given to lay the upper parts of Mud island, where the ground is low, under water, so as to prevent the enemy from making a lodgement there.

General Washington had always felt the peculiar advantage which must result from a victory over the enemy before a junction between their fleet and army could be effected, and had been determined to risk much to gain one. He had, therefore, fought the battle of German town, and

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after receiving some small reinforcements, had again taken a position from which it might be practicable once more to attack them to advantage. By withdrawing to Philadelphia, Sir William Howe had taken a position so much stronger than that at German town, and so much nearer the point against which his operations were now to be directed, as very much to diminish the hope inspired by his former situation, of being able to seize some moment when his force might be so divided as to afford a fair probability of attacking him with success. Yet the American army approached within fifteen miles of the city, and from that camp had anxiously sought an occasion of giving the enemy some blow which might compel him to abandon the metropolis. The circumspect caution of General Howe afforded none. After the repulse at Red bank, he took his measures slowly, but with certainty, to obtain possession of the forts, without again encountering the hazards of an assault.

In this state of things, intelligence was received of the successful termination of the northern campaign, in consequence of which, great part of the troops employed against Burgoyne might be drawn to aid the army in Pennsylvania. But it was feared, that before these reinforcements could arrive, the enemy would succeed in obtaining possession of the forts, and removing the obstruc-

tions to the navigation of the Delaware. This consideration furnished a strong motive for risking much, in order to raise the siege of fort Mifflin; but the relative force of the armies, the difficulties attending an attack in their present situation, and above all, the danger that a defeat might so weaken him, that he might be disabled from meeting the enemy, even after the arrival of the troops now expected from the northern army, determined General Washington not to hazard a second attack while under his present circumstances.

A council of general officers was called the day before Varnum had crossed the Delaware, who unanimously concurred in this opinion. At that time, the effective force of the British army, according to the best estimate the general could make of it, amounted to at least ten thousand rank and file. He supposed this estimate to be more probably too low than too high.

The effective force of the continental army in rank and file, including Varnum's brigade, amounted to eight thousand three hundred and thirteen regulars, and two thousand seven hundred and seventeen militia, of whom nineteen hundred and eighty-six, being the militia of Maryland and Virginia, would be discharged in three days. The garrisons of forts Mifflin and Mercer, consisting then of about six hundred and fifty

continental

continental troops, and three hundred Pennsylvania militia, and the detachment of about five hundred militia on the other side of the Schuylkill, under General Potter, were not included in this computation.

To expedite as much as possible the reinforcements from the north, Colonel Hamilton was immediately dispatched to represent fully to General Gates the condition both of the British and American armies in Pennsylvania, and to urge him, if he contemplated for them no other service of more importance, to send immediately to his aid the fifteen regiments of Massachussetts, and three of New Hampshire, which had been employed in the northern department. His orders were not peremptory, because it was not impossible that some other object (as the capture of New York) still more interesting than expelling General Howe from Philadelphia, might be contemplated by Gates; and with the accomplishment of any such object he meant not to interfere.

While these exertions were making by the American general to accelerate the aids expected from the north, Sir William Howe perseveringly prosecuted his preparations against fort Mifflin. In the mean time it was discovered that a regular communication by water was kept up with the fleet by boats, which passed in the night with muffled oars between Province and Mud islands, very

near the shore of the former, up to the mouth of the Schuylkill. This was communicated to the commodore, who thought it impracticable to prevent the intercourse.

The preparations for the meditated attack on fort Mifflin, from floating batteries and from Province island, where very extensive and efficient works had been erected, were now nearly completed; and there appeared to be no mode of certainly preventing its success, but by driving the enemy out of the island. Such an enterprise, after being contemplated for some time, was deemed too hazardous, and was therefore abandoned. To ensure success, the party must have amounted to at least fifteen hundred men, who could only enter the island by marching towards Chester, as far as the Bell tavern near Derby, from whence it was necessary to turn down to the Delaware, and march four miles up a narrow neck of land, to the works to be attacked. The enemy had constructed a bridge over the Schuylkill within four miles of the Bell tavern; and, consequently, on their first alarm in Province island, it would be in their power to throw a body of troops into the rear of the American party, which would effectually cut off his retreat.

The attempt then could not be made without a covering party sufficiently strong to secure the retreat

treat of the detachment which should enter Province island, or a removal of the whole army to the other side of the Schuylkill.

The firſt measure would so weaken the camp, as to leave all the artillery and stores exposed to the enemy, who might turn their whole force either against the covering party, or the portion of the army remaining in camp, and obtain a sure and easy victory over either. To the second, there were many and great objections. A removal to the west side of the Schuylkill would uncover the stores at Easton, Bethlehem, and Allan town, as well as several hospitals, which were within the reach of the enemy. It would also, by placing the Schuylkill between the two armies, the passages over which General Howe commanded, enable him to make larger detachments against Red bank than could be hazarded while the American army lay in full force within twelve miles of him, without any intervening impediment.

These considerations compelled the general to abandon the enterprise against Province island, though he was aware of its importance to the enemy, and the danger to fort Mifflin from the fortifications constructed on it. He was under the necessity of quietly looking on, and observing the progress of the work, without being able to obstruct it.

When their batteries, both on the island and on the

the water, were completed; intelligence was received that a grand attack would be made, for which purpose it was expected that a considerable force would be detached from the army in Philadelphia. In the opinion that such a measure would afford an opportunity of engaging with advantage those who should remain, a council of general officers was once more summoned; who unanimously declared against such an attempt, and it was consequently relinquished.

Early in the morning of the tenth of November, a new and large battery on Province island, of twenty-four and thirty-two pounders, and two howitzers of eight inches each, opened, about five hundred yards from fort Mifflin, which kept up through the day, and for several successive days, an incessant fire. The block-houses were reduced to a heap of ruins, the palisades were beaten down, and most of the guns dismounted and otherwise disabled. The barracks were battered in every part, so as to render it impracticable for the troops to continue in them. They were under the necessity of working and watching the whole night, to repair the damages of the day, and to guard against a storm of which they were in perpetual apprehension. If, in the day, a few moments were allowed for repose, it was taken on the wet earth, which was rendered, by the heavy rains that fell about this time, a soft mud. The garrison

rison was relieved by General Varnum with fresh men every forty-eight hours; but his brigade was so weak, that half the men were constantly on duty.

Colonel Smith was decidedly of opinion, and in which General Varnum concurred, that a storm, if attempted, would certainly succeed, and that the garrison ought to be withdrawn; but General Washington still cherished the hope that the place might be maintained till he should be reinforced from the northern army. He conceived that a storm would not be attempted till the works were battered down, and therefore recommended that the whole night should be employed in repairs. To make them the more expeditiously, he directed draughts from the militia every night, with the promise that they should be permitted to return every morning to Red bank, and ordered that it should be defended to the last extremity. Never were orders better executed.

Several of the garrison were killed, and among them Captain Treat, a very gallant officer, who commanded the artillery. Colonel Smith received a contusion on his hip and arm, which obliged him to give up the command, and retire to Red bank. Major Fleury was also slightly wounded, but not sufficiently to prevent his continuing to perform, with unremitted exertions, the arduous duties of his station. His report to the commander in chief was,

was, that though the block-houses were beaten down, all the guns in them, except two, disabled, and several breaches made in the walls, the place was still defensible; but the garrison was so unequal to what was required by the extent of the lines, and was so dispirited by watching, fatigue, and constant exposure to the cold rains, which were almost incessant, that he dreaded the event of an attempt to carry the place by assault. Fresh troops were ordered to their relief from Varnum's brigade, and the command was taken first by Colonel Russell, and afterwards by Major Thayer.

The artillery of the fort commanded by Captain Lee, since the death of Captain Treat, was extremely well served. The enemy were several times thrown into evident confusion, and a floating battery, which opened in the morning, was entirely silenced in the course of the day. Intelligence was received that efforts were making to bring up a frigate in the channel between the islands, followed by a sloop carrying her guns; and this intelligence, obtained from a reconnoitring party, was immediately communicated to the commodore, with orders to sink a hulk to obstruct the passage; but the difficulty of executing this order prevented its being attempted.

The defence being more obstinate than had been expected, the enemy brought up their ships as far as the obstructions in the river permitted, and kept up

up from them, as well as from their batteries, a most tremendous fire. The cover for the troops being now greatly impaired, they sustained much more injury than in the commencement of the siege. The brave garrison, however, still maintained their ground with the most unshaken firmness. In the midst of this severe and trying conflict, the Vigilant and a sloop of war were brought up the inner channel between Mud and Province islands, and, taking a station within one hundred yards of the works, not only kept up a most destructive cannonade, but threw hand grenades into them; and, with musquetry from her round top, killed every man that appeared on the platform.

Major Thayer applied to the commodore to remove these vessels, and informed him, that it would be impracticable longer to maintain the fort, if they kept their station. The commodore ordered six gallies on this service; but, after reconnoitring the situation of the vessels, they returned without effecting any thing. Their report was, that these ships were so covered by the batteries on Province island, that it was impossible to remove them.

The fort was now apparently no longer tenable. The works were all in ruins, and afforded no protection to the garrison, which had already suffered very much. The position of the Vigilant rendered any further continuance on the island a useless and

and prodigal waste of human life; and about eleven o'clock in the night, the garrison was withdrawn.

Another attempt was made to drive the vessels from their stations, with the determination, if it should succeed, again to take possession of the island; but the gallies effected nothing, and a detachment from Province island soon occupied the ground which had been abandoned.

The day after receiving intelligence of the evacuation of fort Mifflin, General Washington detached Generals St. Clair, de Kalb, and Knox, to confer with General Varnum and the officers at fort Mercer, and after reviewing the ground and the river, to report on the practicability of continuing to defend the obstructions in the channel, and to state the force which would be necessary for that purpose. A council of the officers of the flotilla had already been called by the commodore, in pursuance of a request of the commander in chief, made before the evacuation had taken place, who were unanimously of opinion, that it would be impracticable for the flotilla, after the loss of the island, to maintain its station, or to assist in preventing the chevaux de frieze from being weighed by the ships of the enemy. This service, however, they conceived might be effectually performed by batteries from the Jersey shore. The general officers who had been requested to view the situation

tion of the works on that shore, and of the river, reported in favour of maintaining them. General Varnum and Colonel Greene appeared disposed to abandon the fort, as they believed it incapable of being defended against an attack by land, and were also of opinion, that it had been in a great degree deprived of its importance by the loss of Mud island; since which, the vessels of the enemy navigated the water between Mud and Province islands, unmolested, and in open day. They were also apprehensive, that by persevering to hold an indefensible place, the garrison would probably be lost, since the enemy might cross the Delaware, both above and below them, and a retreat by water was no longer practicable. Fort Mercer is situated between Manto and Timber creeks, which are impassible several miles, so that the retreat of the garrison could only be in one direction.

Their anxiety on this subject was increased by certain intelligence, that Lord Cornwallis, with a very strong body of troops, reported to be from three to five thousand, had been detached from Philadelphia, and that his destination was avowed to be fort Mercer.

General Howe had now completed a line of defence from the Schuylkill to the Delaware, and a reinforcement, ordered from New York, had arrived at Chester. These two circumstances enabled him to form an army in the Jerseys, sufficient for

for the reduction of fort Mercer, without weakening himself so much in Philadelphia, as to be apprehensive of danger from an attack on his lines. He still deemed it of the utmost importance, to open completely the navigation of the Delaware. Notwithstanding the supplies from the adjacent country, and the communication he had kept up with his ships, through the passage along Province and Carpenters islands, his army and the inhabitants of the city had suffered severely, both for provisions and fuel. He was, therefore, still determined to carry this favourite point.

Every preparation being now made, Lord Cornwallis, about one o'clock in the morning of the seventeenth, marched with a strong detachment to Chester, from whence he crossed over to Billing's point the next day, and was joined by the reinforcement from New York.

General Washington received immediate intelligence of the march of this detachment, which he conjectured might amount to about two thousand men, and gave information thereof to General Varnum.

Having received about the same time, the report of St. Clair, de Kalb, and Knox, in favour of maintaining fort Mercer, he gave orders that it should not be evacuated but in the last necessity; and, in order to support the garrison, one division of the army was ordered immediately to cross the Delaware

Delaware at Burlington, and expresses were dispatched to the northern troops, who were now marching on by brigades, directing them, instead of crossing the Delaware at Coryell's ferry, in conformity with instructions which had before been given, to move down on the north side of the river, until they should receive further orders.

Major-general Greene, an officer who had been distinguished early in the war, by the commander in chief, for the solidity of his judgment, and his military talents, was selected for this expedition. A hope was entertained that he would be able, not only to protect fort Mercer, but to obtain also some decisive advantage over Lord Cornwallis. The situation of the fort, which his lordship could only invest by placing himself between Timber and Manto creeks, would expose the assailants to great peril from a respectable force in their rear. In the expectation that the vessels would still be of service in the defence of the place, they were ordered to remain on their present station somewhat longer, and to furnish every aid in their power.

But before the troops could be passed over the Delaware, Lord Cornwallis approached with an army rendered more powerful than had been expected, by the junction of the reinforcement from New York, and the fort was evacuated.

A few of the smaller gallies escaped up the river,

and the others were abandoned, and burnt by their crews.

The enemy being now in perfect possession of both shores, could work on the obstructions in the river without molestation. But a hope was still entertained, that much of what had been lost might be recovered.

A victory would restore the Jersey shore, and this object was deemed so all-important, that General Greene's instructions, though not peremptory, indicated the expectations of the commander in chief, that he would be in a condition to fight Lord Cornwallis.

That judicious officer feared the reproach of avoiding an action, much less than the just censure of sacrificing the real interests of his country, by engaging the enemy on disadvantageous terms. The accounts most to be relied on, represented their numbers at five thousand men, including marines; a force superior to that at present under General Greene, even counting his militia as regulars. Glover's brigade from the north was expected, but had not yet arrived, and in the mean time, the service originally contemplated being effected, Lord Cornwallis might return to Philadelphia. He communicated this state of things to the commander in chief, who directed him not to advance on the enemy, till his whole force was collected.

Before

Before the arrival of Glover's brigade, Lord Cornwallis, who, during this incursion, had collected large quantities of fresh provisions for the relief of the British army, had taken post on a point of land making into the Delaware, called Gloucester, which was entirely under cover of the guns of the ships, and was from thence embarking his baggage, and the stores he had collected for Philadelphia.

To attack him in this situation would have been little less than madness, and he manifested no disposition to leave it. About one hundred and fifty men of Morgan's rifle corps, under Lieutenant-colonel Butler, and an equal number of militia, under the Marquis de la Fayette, who still served as a volunteer, attacked with great gallantry a piquet of the enemy, consisting also of about three hundred men, and drove them, with the loss of twenty or thirty killed, and a greater number wounded, quite into their camp; after which they retired without being pursued.

The marquis, who was said by General Greene to search for danger, was charmed with the conduct of this small detachment. "I found the riflemen," said that nobleman in a letter to General Washington, "above *even* their reputation; and the militia above all expectations I could have formed of them."

Believing that the detachment under Lord

Cornwallis would immediately follow the magazines they had collected, and that the present object of Sir William Howe was, after uniting his forces, to attack the American army while divided; General Washington ordered Greene to lose no further time in Jersey, but immediately to recross the Delaware and join the grand army.

Thus, after one continued struggle of more than six weeks, in which the continental troops displayed great military virtues, did the army of Philadelphia secure to itself the possession of that city, by opening a free communication with the fleet.

While these transactions were taking place on the Delaware, General Dickinson, after informing himself precisely of the force and situation of the enemy on Staten island, projected another expedition against that post, in the hope of being able entirely to cut off Skinner's brigade of Loyal Americans which was stationed there. His perfect knowledge of the country enabled him to make such a disposition as promised success, and authorized a hope that his plan would be executed, as formed. He had collected about two thousand men, and requested from General Putnam, a diversion on the side of King's bridge, in order to prevent a sudden reinforcement from New York.

Knowing well that success depended on secrecy, he had concealed his object even from his field officers, until eight o'clock of the night on which it

was

was to be executed: yet, by three in the morning, information of the design was given to General Skinner, who was thereby put on his guard; and, on the first alarm, he saved himself and his brigade, by taking refuge in some works too strong to be carried by assault. In the flight, a few prisoners were made and a few men killed, after which General Dickinson brought off his party with a loss of only three killed, and ten slightly wounded.

CHAPTER V.

An Inquiry into the Conduct of General Schuyler at his Request, which terminates to his Honour—Burgoyne appears before Ticonderoga—Evacuation of Ticonderoga and Mount Independence—The American Army evacuate Skeensborough, and retire to Fort Anne—Colonel Warner attacked by General Frazer, and obliged to retreat—Colonel Long evacuates Fort Anne, and retires to Fort Edward—Proclamation of Burgoyne, and Counter Proclamation of Schuyler—Burgoyne approaches Fort Edward, and Schuyler retires to Saratoga; from thence to Stillwater—Colonel St. Leger invests Fort Schuyler—Herkemer advancing to the relief of the Fort, falls into an ambuscade, and is defeated with loss—Colonel Baum is detached to seize the Magazines at Bennington; is attacked in his entrenchments by General Starke, and entirely routed—Colonel Brekman marches to Baum's aid, is attacked by Colonel Warner and defeated—Colonel St. Leger abandons the siege of Fort Schuyler, and retires to Ticonderoga—The murder of Miss Maccrea—General Gates takes the Command of the northern Army—Burgoyne encamps on the heights of Saratoga—He attacks General Gates at Stillwater—Retreats to Saratoga

Saratoga—Surrender of the army under Burgoyne —Forts Montgomery and Clinton taken by the British—Peeks-kill, together with Forts Independence and Constitution, evacuated by the Americans—Ticonderoga and Mount Independence evacuated by the enemy.

WHILE events of great variety and of deep interest were thus passing in the north, General Washington, with forces constantly inferior to the enemy, and struggling with accumulated difficulties, produced by the want of arms, ammunition, clothes, and of provisions; and surrounded by a people many of whom were disaffected; yet kept up in the middle states, without essential loss, a stubborn though unequal conflict.

Having abandoned for the present his designs on Ticonderoga, and retreated from Crown Point, Sir Guy Carleton withdrew into Canada, at the close of the preceding campaign, and distributed his army for winter quarters, in the several villages from the Isle aux Noix and Montreal, to Quebec. General Burgoyne, who had served under Carleton, made a winter voyage to England, in order to state fully to administration, the condition of their affairs in the northern department; and to assist in making arrangements for the next campaign.

On the part of the Americans, their army, having

ing been formed only for one year, dissolved of itself at the expiration of the terms for which the troops had been engaged. Far from being able to attempt any thing against the detached parts of the enemy, which were, perhaps, too far from each other to furnish mutual aid, if vigorously attacked; they found infinite difficulty in keeping up even the appearance of garrisons in their forts, and entertained serious apprehensions of an attempt on Ticonderoga, while the firmness of the ice afforded an easy passage for troops over the lakes.

The regiments to be raised in Massachussetts, New Hampshire, and the north-western parts of New York, were assigned for the defence of this frontier; but the recruiting service proceeded so slowly, and such difficulties were experienced in clothing and arming those who were enlisted, that it became indispensable to the safety of the important posts on the lakes, to call in the aid of the northern militia.

General Schuyler, who had always discharged the various duties of superintending Indian affairs, preparing the defences for the lakes and the forts, providing for the wants of the northern army, making the proper distribution of the troops, and commanding them after their retreat from Canada, was indefatigable during the winter in making arrangements for the defence of lake George, and

and preparing generally for the ensuing campaign. General Gates, when the enemy had retired into winter quarters, joined the army under General Washington, and the command of the few troops remaining in garrison devolved on Colonel, afterwards General Wayne.

To guard as much as possible against the dangers to which the weakness of the garrisons exposed the forts, the regiments destined for the northern service were ordered, during the winter, to march by detachments, leaving behind them a sufficient number of officers for the business of recruiting; yet the spring was far advanced, and but a small force collected. The perpetual waste of arms, which was the unavoidable consequence of the continual change of hands into which they were placed, added to the distressing scarcity of clothing, rendered it so extremely difficult to equip the troops for the service, that, notwithstanding the exertions of General Schuyler, aided by those of the commander in chief, Ticonderoga was generally through the winter exposed to the dangers of a coup de main.

In forming his plans for the ensuing campaign General Schuyler required a force of about fifteen thousand men, and wished them to be composed in part of southern troops. The motive assigned for this wish was, that the principles of discipline and subordination were established with more ease among

among them, than among the regiments drawn entirely from the north; and he counted on considerable effect from the salutary influence of their example. It is however probable, that the want of subordination, which Schuyler observed and complained of, was more attributable to the defects in the establishment of the army, especially to their short enlistments, than to any characteristic difference between the troops drawn from the different parts of the continent. This wish was resisted by the commander in chief. To the objections furnished by the geographical situation of the country from which the troops were to be raised, and in which they were to act, were added other considerations which opposed their being unnecessarily mingled. Although the cause was the most interesting in which a people could be engaged, and although that cause was common to all, it was found extremely difficult to prevent those irritations, animosities, and discontents, from shewing themselves between the troops of different states, which have so often broken coalitions, and impaired the exertions of armies of different nations acting together. It was found very difficult to forget the subdivisions which separated them from each other, and to recollect that they were all Americans. Finding it impracticable to subdue this temper, General Washington thought it more advisable to endeavour, by forming the two armies entirely

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of the troops drawn from different parts of the continent, to excite a spirit of emulation, and thus turn it to account,

The uncertainty in which the commander in chief remained of the plan formed by the enemy for the ensuing campaign; the facility with which they were enabled, by the command of the ocean, to draw their forces together at any given point; left it entirely doubtful whether the army of Canada would endeavour to effect its junction with General Howe by the way of Albany, or, having secured that colony from invasion by obtaining possession of the lakes, would embark on the St. Lawrence, and proceed by water to New York. Weighing the advantages and hazards attending either plan of operations, General Washington thought it by no means improbable that the latter would be adopted, and therefore deemed it unsafe to adhere to such an arrangement of the military force of the nation, as entirely to exclude all provision against an event so very possible. This consideration, added to the decisive influence which being able to defeat General Howe, and to destroy the army under his command, before the arrival of reinforcements from Europe, or Canada, would have on the war, an event which would be very practicable should the regiments ordered by Congress be nearly complete, and be brought to bear on the same point, induced him to change his

his original determination of ordering all the regiments of Massachussetts to Ticonderoga, and to direct eight of them to rendezvous at Peeks-kill. That was a position from whence they might reinforce either army, as the movements of the enemy might render it necessary. Unfortunately, the recruiting service proceeded so slowly, and such unexpected delays attended bringing the new raised troops into the field, that this change in the destination of some of the regiments of Massachussetts was of no essential consequence. The army in Jersey could neither be reinforced in time, nor with sufficient numbers to effect the great objects which had been contemplated, nor could the regiments which marched to Peeks-kill have reached Ticonderoga in time for the opening of the campaign, had they taken the most direct route to that place.

The services of Schuyler in the northern department had been much more solid than brilliant. Frequently dissatisfied with his situation, and disgusted with the injustice * he supposed himself to

* On the 6th of March 1776, when the command of the army was given to General Thomas, the head quarters of General Schuyler had been fixed, by a resolution of Congress, at Albany, and that resolution had not yet been repealed. General Gates was now directed to repair to Ticonderoga to take command of the army, and Major-general St. Clair was ordered to the same place to serve under him.

experience,

experience, he had for some time contemplated a resignation, and had only been restrained from leaving the army by the deep interest he felt in the struggle of his country for independence. When his fears of a sudden attack on Ticonderoga, during the winter, had been removed by the situation of lake Champlain, he waited in person on Congress, for the purpose of having his complicated accounts adjusted, of having his conduct inquired into, and of supporting, by the representations he should make before quitting the service, those necessary measures of defence in the north, which were suggested by his perfect knowledge of the country. At his request, a committee, consisting of a member from each state, was appointed to inquire into his conduct from the time he had held a command in the army. When the arduous services performed by this meritorious officer came to be investigated, they were found so greatly to have exceeded any estimate which had been made of them, that Congress deemed it essential to the public interests, to prevail on him to retain his commission. Repealing the resolution of the 6th of March 1776, which fixed his head quarters at Albany, they directed him to proceed forthwith to the northern department,* in which he was ordered to take the command.

* Consisting of Albany, Ticonderoga, fort Stanwix, and their dependencies.

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On his arrival, he found the army of the north, like that in the middle department, not only too weak for the objects entrusted to it, but also very badly supplied with arms, clothes, and provisions. From a spy who had been discovered and seized about Onion river, he obtained the information that General Burgoyne had arrived at Quebec, and was to command the army as soon as it had marched out of Canada: that while Ticonderoga was to be attacked by the main army, and the communication between mount Independence and Skeensborough cut off, Sir John Johnson, with a body of British, Canadians, and Indians, was to penetrate to the Mohawk by Oswego, and place himself between fort Stanwix and fort Edward. The spy further stated that he had heard nothing of the arrival of any troops from Europe with General Burgoyne.

This information was immediately communicated to General Washington, and was received by him about the time Sir William Howe made his movement from Brunswick with a show of marching to Philadelphia through Jersey: a movement which had induced the general to order to his assistance all the troops which could be spared from Peeks-kill.

If no reinforcements had been received from Europe, he conceived that the invading army under Burgoyne could not amount to more than five thousand

thousand men, a force by no means competent to the reduction of Ticonderoga; and therefore he still doubted the reality of the design to invest it. Orders, however, were immediately given to General Putnam to hold four of the strongest regiments from Massachussetts, to be commanded by General Nixon, in constant readiness to move on the shortest notice, and to have a sufficient number of vessels prepared to transport them without delay to Albany.

A very few days removed the doubts which had existed respecting the intentions of Burgoyne. It was understood that his army was advancing towards the lakes; and about the same time, Sir William Howe crossed over from Jersey to Staten island, where he was apparently making preparations for an embarkation. General Washington was now persuaded that the movements of the two armies had been made in concert, and that they would co-operate with each other on the Hudson. Immediate orders were given to embark Nixon's brigade for Albany, which was to sail the instant the troops which had been called from Peeks-kill into Jersey, and which, on the evacuation of that State, had immediately been directed to return, should be near enough to that post to reach it in time to defend it against any sudden attempt by a movement up the river.

General Schuyler was sensible of the danger which

which threatened his department, and made every exertion to meet it. He visited in person the different posts, used the utmost activity in obtaining supplies of provision to enable them to hold out in the event of a siege, and had proceeded to Albany, both for the purpose of attending to the supplies, and of expediting the march of Nixon's brigade, whose arrival was expected, when he received intelligence from General St. Clair, who was entrusted with the defence of Ticonderoga, that Burgoyne had appeared before that place.

In the course of the preceding winter, a plan for penetrating to the Hudson from Canada, by way of the lakes, had been completely digested, and its most minute parts arranged in the cabinet of St. James's.* General Burgoyne, who assisted in forming it, was entrusted with its execution; and was to lead a formidable army against Ticonderoga as soon as the season would permit. At the same time, a smaller party under Colonel St. Leger, composed of Canadians, new raised Americans, and a few Europeans, aided by a powerful body of Indians marching from Oswego, was to enter the country by the way of the Mohawk, and join the grand army on the Hudson.*

The force assigned for this service was such as

*Ann. Reg.

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the general himself deemed sufficient; and, as it was the favourite plan of the minister, no circumstance was omitted which could give to the numbers employed their utmost possible efficiency. The troops were furnished with every military equipment which the service required; the assisting general officers were of the first reputation, and the train of artillery was, perhaps, the most powerful ever annexed to an army not more numerous.*

Burgoyne reached Quebec as early as it was practicable to sail up the St. Lawrence; and by the extraordinary exertions of Governor Carleton, who though so disgusted at losing the command of the army as to solicit his recall, yet strained every nerve to facilitate the expedition, he was able to appear in full force, on the river Boquet, on the western banks of lake Champlain, much earlier than General Gates had supposed to be possible. Here he met the Indians in a grand council, after which he gave them a war feast. Much of the cruelty afterwards practised by these savages has been attributed to this officer; but it must be admitted that the speech he made to them on this occasion, was calculated rather to diminish, than increase their native ferocity. He

* Ann. Reg.

endeavoured to impress on them the distinction between enemies in the field, and the helpless unarmed inhabitants, many of whom were friendly to their cause; between battle and murder; and addressing himself to their avarice, promised rewards for prisoners, but none for scalps. It was perhaps not unfortunate for America, that in some instances, peculiarly calculated to excite and interest the human feelings, these feeble restraints were totally disregarded.

Having published, at Putnam river, a manifesto designed to act on the fears and hopes of the people of the country through which he was to march, and taken means to give it circulation, he halted a few days at Crown point, to make the necessary dispositions for the attack of Ticonderoga.

This fortress lies on the western shore, and only a few miles to the northward from the commencement of that narrow inlet by which the water from lake George is conveyed to lake Champlain. Crown point lies about twelve miles further north, at the extremity of the inlet. The first of these places is situated on an angle of land covered by rocks, and surrounded on three sides by water. A great part of the fourth side was covered by a deep morass, and where that fails on the north-west quarter, the old French lines still continued as a defence. The Americans had strengthened these lines with additional works,

and

and a block-house. They had other posts, with works and block-houses on the left, towards lake George. To the right of the French lines, they had also two new block-houses, with other works.

Opposite to Ticonderoga, on the eastern shore of the inlet, is a high circular hill called mount Independence, which had been occupied on the abandonment of Crown point, and had been fortified with great care and attention. On the summit of this hill, which is Table land, had been erected a star fort, inclosing a large square of barracks, well fortified and supplied with artillery. The foot of the mountain, which on the west side projects into the water, was strongly intrenched to its edge, and the intrenchment well lined with heavy artillery. A battery about half way up the mount, sustained and covered these lower works.*

These two posts had, with infinite labour, been joined together by a bridge of communication thrown over the inlet. The bridge was supported on twenty-two sunken piers of very large timber placed at nearly equal distances; the spaces between these were filled with separate floats, each about fifty feet long, and twelve feet wide, strongly fastened together with chains and rivets,

* Ann. Reg.

and as effectually attached to sunken pillars. On the lake Champlain side of the bridge, it was defended by a boom composed of very large pieces of timber fastened together by riveted bolts, and double chains made of iron, an inch and an half square. Thus, not only a communication was maintained between these two posts, but all access by water from the northern side was totally cut off.*

It is to be observed that as the inlet, immediately after passing Ticonderoga, assumes a new form, suddenly widening to a considerable breadth, and becoming navigable for vessels of burthen, so from thence it also holds the name of Champlain, although it is not yet properly a part of the lake. On the other hand, the southern gut from lake George, besides being narrow, is also rendered unnavigable by shallows and falls; but, on its arrival at Ticonderoga, it is joined by a great body of water on the eastern side, called in this part South river, but higher up towards its source, before its junction with a stream running from South bay, and with East bay, the waters of which unite almost at the same point, it is known under the appellation of Wood creek. The confluence of these waters at Ticonderoga forms a small bay to the southward of the bridge of communica-

* Ann. Reg.

tion,

tion, and the point of land formed by their junction is composed of a mountain called Sugar hill.

This hill effectually overlooks, and commands the works of Ticonderoga and mount Independence, as well as the bridge of communication between them. So unfavourable a circumstance had not escaped the attention of the American officers. A council had been called to take into consideration the propriety of occupying and fortifying this mount. Its importance to the defence of the place was obvious, but the works were already so extensive, as to require a garrison of ten thousand men, and to enlarge them without the expectation of a correspondent addition of troops was to add weakness instead of strength. The hope too was entertained, that the extreme difficulty of access to the Sugar mount, and the savage roughness of its surface, would prevent the enemy from attempting to profit from its situation.

From Crown point the royal army advanced on both sides of the lake, on the 30th of June, keeping up a communication between the two divisions, by means of their naval force, which preserved its station in the centre. On the first appearance of the van, (July the 1st,) which threw up works for its defence, General St. Clair seemed confirmed in the opinion he had before entertained, that the assailing army was inconsiderable;

and he was sanguine in his hope, that he should find no great difficulty in repelling it. The next day, the enemy appeared in greater force, and encamped on both sides the lake, within four miles of Ticonderoga. A strong party was pushed forward to Three-mile point, and the fleet anchored just out of reach of the guns of the fort.

In the morning of the 2d of July, an attempt was made by General St. Clair to secure some cattle and stores at the landing place for batteaux, coming from lake George; but the party detached on this service, not having executed it with the requisite dispatch, the day appeared, and the stores were ordered back to fort George. A detachment was at the same time sent to reinforce the party at the landing, who were directed to destroy the batteaux, which could not be sent back to the fort, and after evacuating and burning the works, block-houses and mills, in that quarter, to retire to Ticonderoga. This was effected after a slight skirmish, in which a few men were killed; after which, the enemy, without opposition, took possession of the important post at mount Hope, which in part commanded the lines on the northern side, and entirely cut off the communication with lake George.

The weakness of his garrison was the motive which induced General St. Clair to give up this fort without a struggle. He apprehended that it would

would be impracticable to support it without such a reinforcement as would hazard a general action in the open field, and supposed it to be most advisable to concentre his force about Ticonderoga and mount Independence.

After taking possession of mount Hope, the British line, composed of the division on the western side of Champlain, was extended from the mountain quite to the lake, so as completely to enclose the garrison on that side. The German division under Major-general Reidesel, which occupied the eastern shore of the lake, was encamped at Three-mile point, and had pushed forward a detachment near the rivulet which runs east of mount Independence.

The enemy now laboured assiduously in bringing up their artillery, and completing their communications. On the 5th of July, Sugar hill was examined, and the report being, that the ascent, although extremely difficult, was practicable, and that the top might be levelled so as to admit cannon, the work was immediately commenced, and pressed on with so much vigour, that the battery might have been opened the next day. These operations received no check from the garrison; most probably it was not in a condition to give any.

The situation of St. Clair was now at its crisis. On the western side of the lake, the fort was completely

pletely invested, and mount Hope, now in possession of the enemy, entirely commanded the inlet, through which the waters of lake George communicate with those of Champlain. By taking possession of Sugar hill, the ground between lake George and South river was acquired by the enemy; and General Reidesel's camp on the eastern side, extending from the lake to the eastern run, it only remained to occupy the ground between the eastern run and South river, a distance not exceeding three quarters of a mile, to render the investment complete. This General St. Clair was informed would be effected the next day.

In this state of things, Ticonderoga and mount Independence must either be immediately evacuated, or maintained at the hazard of losing the garrisons when they should be no longer tenable.

Between these cruel alternatives, General St. Clair did not hesitate to choose the former; but supposing it prudent to take the advice of a council of war, the general officers, and Colonel Long, who commanded a brigade, were convened on the 5th of July, and they unanimously advised the immediate evacuation of the forts.

Preparations for the retreat were instantly commenced. The invalids, the hospital, and such stores as could be moved in the course of the night, were put on board a number of batteaux,

and

and proceeded under the guard of Colonel Long with his regiment, and some draughts from other corps, up the South river to Skeensborough. The main body of the army, having entirely passed over to mount Independence, directed its march by land through Castletown to the same place.

In the hope that the army might make considerable progress before its retreat should be discovered, orders had been given to march out with the most profound silence, and particularly to set nothing on fire. These judicious orders were unfortunately disobeyed, and before the rear guard was in motion, the house which had been occupied by General de Fermoy was perceived to be in flames. This served as a signal to the enemy, who immediately entered the works, and fired, but without effect, on the rear of the retreating army.

A rapid pursuit by land was made without loss of time by the Generals Frazer and Reidesel, while General Burgoyne determined to follow in person the detachment under Colonel Long, which had retreated up the South river towards Skeensborough.

The bridge, the boom, and other works, the construction of which had employed the labour of ten months, were cut through, so as by nine o'clock to afford a passage for the Royal George and Inflexible frigates, as well as for the gun boats; and

and about three in the afternoon of July the 6th, the foremost brigade of gun boats engaged the American galleys near the falls of Skeensborough.

In the mean time, three regiments had debarked at some distance from the fort, with the intention of attacking it by land, and cutting off the retreat of the garrison, as well as that of the detachment in the boats and galleys. This manœuvre being discovered, the works and batteaux were set on fire, and the troops retired without any considerable loss of men, to fort Anne. On this occasion, all the baggage of the army, and a great quantity of provisions and military stores, were either destroyed by the Americans, or taken by the enemy.

Knowing the inferiority of his numbers, and that he could only hope to save his army by the rapidity of his march, General St. Clair reached Castletown, thirty miles from Ticonderoga, on the night succeeding the evacuation of the fort. The rear guard under Colonel Warner halted six miles short of that place. Having been augmented by those, who, unable to keep up with the main body, had fallen out of the line of march, it amounted, according to a statement made by St. Clair, to somewhat more than one thousand men.

The next morning, at five o'clock, they were overtaken and attacked by General Frazer with eight

eight hundred and fifty men. The action was warm and well contested. In its commencement orders were given to two regiments of militia, who had separated the evening before from the main body, and were lying within two miles of Colonel Warner, to move up to his assistance. Instead of obeying these orders, they consulted their own safety, and pressed forward to Castletown with the utmost expedition. While the action was kept up with great spirit on both sides, General Reidesel arrived with his division of Germans, and the Americans were compelled to give way in all directions.

In this action, Colonel Francis, several other officers, and upwards of two hundred men, were, according to the account given by Burgoyne, left dead on the field, and one colonel, seven captains, ten subalterns, and two hundred and ten privates, were made prisoners. Near six hundred are supposed, on the same authority, to have been wounded, many of whom must have perished in attempting to escape through the woods towards the inhabited country, now Vermont. The enemy state their own loss at thirty-five killed, among whom was one field officer, and one hundred and forty-four wounded, among whom were two majors and five subalterns. From the length and sharpness of the conflict, it is scarcely to be supposed, notwithstanding the difference in arms, that

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the disparity in the killed could have been so considerable. It is the less probable, as the pursuit was not kept up for any length of time.

In General St. Clair's statement of this affair, he supposes about fifty to have been killed and wounded; but as the whole corps except Warner's regiment was entirely dispersed, he could only speak from conjecture, and most probably he was mistaken,

General Burgoyne represented Colonel Warner's numbers at two thousand men, and gave much credit to Frazer and his party for having so long maintained so unequal a conflict; but if the statement made of the strength of the garrison be correct, Warner's corps could not have exceeded twelve hundred, and at that number General St. Clair estimated it. The opinion they gave the British commander of their strength, is evidence of the gallantry with which they fought. Colonel Francis, who fell in the action, was spoken of in terms of great praise by both armies. Just as he received intelligence of this defeat, St. Clair was also informed of the disaster at Skeensborough.

To avoid the enemy, it was now necessary for him to change his route, and he sent orders to Warner to retire to Rutland, where he would join him. At Rutland he fell in with many soldiers who had been separated from the corps, and two days afterwards, at Manchester, he was joined by Warner,

Warner, at the head of about ninety men. After dispatching officers to Bennington, and Number 4, to collect the stragglers, who it was supposed would pass through those places in their way to New England, he proceeded to join General Schuyler at fort Edward.

Colonel Long having retired from Skeensborough up Wood creek to fort Anne, was directed by Schuyler to defend that place. The ninth regiment of British, under Lieutenant-colonel Hill, had been detached against it. On hearing that the Americans were in some force, two other regiments, under Brigadier Powell, were ordered to support the first party. Before the arrival of this reinforcement, the ninth regiment was attacked by Colonel Long, and a sharp skirmish ensued, in which the British kept their ground, and the advantage was claimed by both sides. Hearing that reinforcements were coming up, Long set fire to the works at fort Anne, and retired to fort Edward, on the 7th of July.

At Stillwater, on his way to Ticonderoga, General Schuyler was informed of the evacuation of that place, and at Saratoga, the same day, the total loss of the stores at Skeensborough was also reported to him. From General St. Clair he had heard nothing, and the most serious fears were entertained for the army commanded by that officer. His force, after being joined by Colonel Long,

Long, consisted of about fifteen hundred continental troops, and the same number of militia. They were dispirited by defeat, without tents, badly armed, and had lost a great part of their stores and baggage. That part of the country was generally much alarmed, and even those who were well affected, discovered, as is usual in such circumstances, much more inclination to take care of themselves, than to join the army.

In this gloomy state of things, it is impossible that any officer could have used more diligence or judgment than was displayed by Schuyler.

After the evacuation of fort Anne, Burgoyne found it absolutely necessary to suspend for a time all further pursuit, and to give his army some rest. In the active service in which they had been engaged, many of the soldiers had been two days without provisions, and they were all without tents. The troops were in some derangement, distinct corps were intermingled, and the detachments were far apart from each other: he determined, therefore, to halt a few days at Skeensborough, in order to reassemble his army, and again arrange it. The baggage, artillery, and military stores, were brought up, and preparations were made, with the utmost dispatch, to move forward to Albany.

In the present state of things, unable even to look the enemy in the face, it was of unspeakable importance

importance to the American general to gain time. This short and unavoidable interval from action was, therefore, seized by Schuyler, whose head quarters were at fort Edward, and used to the utmost advantage.

The country between Skeensborough and fort Edward was almost entirely unsettled, covered with thick woods, of a surface extremely rough, and much intersected with creeks and morasses. As far as fort Anne, Wood creek was navigable with batteaux, and of course very useful in the transportation of artillery, military stores, provisions, and heavy baggage.

The first moments of rest, while the enemy were assembling at Skeensborough, were employed by Schuyler in destroying the navigation of Wood creek, by sinking numerous impediments in its course, in breaking up the bridges, and otherwise rendering impassable the roads over which the army of Burgoyne must necessarily march. He was also indefatigable in driving all the live stock out of the way of the enemy, and in bringing from fort George to fort Edward ammunition and other military stores which had been collected there, of which his army was in much need, and which it was essential to bring away before the British could remove their gun boats and artillery into the lake, and render that place untenable.

While thus endeavouring to obstruct the march of

of the enemy, he was not inattentive to the best means of strengthening his own army. Reinforcements of regular troops were earnestly solicited. The militia of New England and New York were called for, and all his influence in the surrounding country was exerted to re-animate the people, and prevent their defection from the American cause. As a means of creating some additional delay in the movements of the enemy, Colonel Warner was posted with his regiment on their left flank, in what was termed the New Hampshire grants, now Vermont, with instructions to raise the militia in that quarter. It was hoped that the appearance of a respectable force, threatening their flank and rear, would induce them to strengthen the garrison of Ticonderoga, and would also check the advance of their main army.

While at Skeensborough, General Burgoyne issued a second proclamation,* summoning the people of the adjacent country to send ten deputies from each township to meet Colonel Skeene at Castletown, in order to deliberate on such measures as might still be adopted to save from destruction those who had not yet conformed to his first proclamation, and submitted to the royal authority. Apprehending some effect from this paper, General Schuyler issued a counter procla-

* Remembrancer.

mation,

mation, stating to the inhabitants the insidious designs of the enemy; warning them, by the example of Jersey, of the danger to which their yielding to this seductive proposition would expose them; and giving them the most solemn assurances that those who should send deputies to this meeting, or should in any manner aid the enemy, would be considered as traitors, and should experience the utmost rigours of the law.

The evacuation of Ticonderoga was a shock for which no part of the United States was prepared. Neither the strength of the invading army nor of the garrison had been any where understood. The opinion was common that no reinforcements had arrived at Quebec that spring, in which case it was believed that not more than five thousand men could be spared from the defence of Canada. Those new raised regiments of New England and New York, which had been allotted to the northern department, had been reported, and were believed by the commander in chief, and by Congress, as well as by the community at large, to contain a much greater number of effectives than they were found actually to comprehend. In addition to these, the officer commanding the garrison was empowered to call to his aid such bodies of militia as he might deem necessary for the defence of his post. A very few days before the place was invested, General Schuyler, from an inspection of

the muster-rolls, had stated the garrison to amount to five thousand men, and the supply of provisions to be abundant. When, therefore, it was understood that a place, on the fortifications of which much money and labour had been expended; which was considered as the key to the whole eastern country, and supposed to contain a garrison nearly equal to the invading army, had been abandoned without a siege; that an immense train of artillery, consisting of one hundred and twenty-eight pieces, and all the baggage, military stores, and provisions, had either fallen into the hands of the enemy, or been destroyed; that the army on its retreat had been attacked, defeated, and dispersed; astonishment pervaded all ranks of men, and the conduct of the officers was almost universally condemned. Congress directed a recal of all the generals of the department, and an inquiry into their conduct. Through New England especially, the most malignant aspersions were cast on them; and General Schuyler, who, from some unknown cause, had never been viewed with favour in that part of the continent, was involved in the common charge of treachery, to which this accumulation of unlooked-for calamity was very generally attributed by the mass of the people.

On the representations of General Washington, the recal of the officers was suspended till he should be of opinion that the state of things would admit

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of such a measure; and on a very full inquiry afterwards made into the conduct of the generals, they were acquitted of all blame.

In the letter of St. Clair to the commander in chief, stating the motives which led to the evacuation of Ticonderoga, and mount Independence, he represented the strength of his garrison, including nine hundred militia, who would consent to stay but a few days, at only three thousand effective rank and file, many of whom were without bayonets. The lines required ten thousand at least to man them properly. He also represented his supply of provisions to have been sufficient for only twenty days, and the works on the Ticonderoga side to have been incomplete, with their flanks undefended. He justified his not having obtained a larger reinforcement of militia, by the scarcity of provisions, the supply on hand having been only furnished after General Schuyler had resumed the command in the department; and attributed his not having evacuated the forts in time to have preserved his army and stores, to the opinion every where prevalent, that there was not a sufficient force in Canada to attempt so hardy an enterprise, and to his not being at liberty to adopt that measure but in the last necessity.

The report of General Burgoyne stated three hundred and forty-nine thousand seven hundred and sixty pounds of flour, and one hundred and

forty-three thousand eight hundred and thirty pounds of salt provisions, to have fallen into his hands. In addition to these stores, a large quantity of live cattle, that had been driven to Ticonderoga a few days before the appearance of the enemy, and had not yet been secured, were acquired by the successful army.

The difference between the report of the garrison made by Schuyler, and that of St. Clair, is to be accounted for partly from the difference between effective rank and file and the total number exhibited by returns, partly from the negligence with which the muster rolls were at that time made out, and in some measure too from misinformation given to General Schuyler respecting the reinforcements of militia said to have come in subsequently to the returns from which he spoke.

On being informed of the distressed state of the remnant of the army, General Washington made great exertions to repair its losses, and to reinforce it. The utmost industry was used to procure a supply of tents; artillery and ammunition were dispatched from Massachussetts; the remaining troops of that state were ordered to that department; and General Lincoln, who possessed, in a very high degree, the confidence of the New England militia, was, on that account, directed to raise and command them. General Arnold, so often distinguished for his gallantry in the field, was now ordered

ordered to the northern army, in the hope that his presence and reputation would serve to re-animate the troops; and, some time afterwards, Colonel Morgan, with his corps of riflemen, was detached on the same service. Through the present dark gloom, Washington discerned a ray of light, and already cherished the hope that, with proper exertions, much good might result from present evil. "The evacuation of Ticonderoga and mount Independence," said he, in a letter of the 15th of July to General Schuyler, "is an event of chagrin and surprise not apprehended, nor within the compass of my reasoning. This stroke is severe indeed, and has distressed us much. But, notwithstanding things at present wear a dark and gloomy aspect, I hope a spirited opposition will check the progress of General Burgoyne's arms, and that the confidence derived from success will hurry him into measures that will, in their consequences, be favourable to us. We should never despair. Our situation has before been unpromising, and has changed for the better. So, I trust, it will again. If new difficulties arise, we must only put forth new exertions, and proportion our efforts to the exigency of the times."

On receiving a letter from General Schuyler of the 17th, stating the position of the enemy, and informing him that a part of their force lay at Skeensborough, a body of between one and two

thousand at Castletown, and that another had returned to Ticonderoga, in order to come by that route across lake George, and that there was also an advanced post near fort Anne, he seemed to anticipate the event which afterwards occurred, and to suggest the measure which first commenced that torrent of misfortune with which Burgoyne became overwhelmed. "Though our affairs," said he, in reply to this information, "have for some days past worn a dark and gloomy aspect, I yet look forward to a fortunate and happy change. I trust General Burgoyne's army will meet, sooner or later, an effectual check; and, as I suggested before, that the success he has had will precipitate his ruin. From your accounts he appears to be pursuing that line of conduct which, of all others, is most favourable to us—I mean acting in detachment. This conduct will certainly give room for enterprise on our part, and expose his parties to great hazard. Could we be so happy as to cut one of them off, though it should not exceed four, five, or six hundred men, it would inspirit the people, and do away much of their present anxiety. In such an event, they would lose sight of past misfortunes; and, urged at the same time by a regard for their own security, they would fly to arms, and afford every aid in their power."

Having allowed a short and necessary repose to his army in the neighbourhood of Skeensborough, while

while parties were employed in bringing up tents and provisions, General Burgoyne, much elated at the success which had hitherto attended him, proceeded with ardour to complete the remaining objects of the campaign. He soon perceived the toils and delays which must be encountered in reaching the Hudson. He found it necessary to open Wood creek, and, which was a work of much more difficulty and labour, to repair the roads and bridges which Schuyler had broken up, and rendered for the present entirely impassible. Immense numbers of trees had been cut so as to fall in layers across the road, with their boughs interlocking with each other, in places where it was impossible to find any other way than that which they covered. Besides removing these, above forty new bridges were to be constructed, and others to be repaired, one of which was entirely of log work, over a morass nearly two miles in extent. Such was the labour and the unavoidable delay of opening these different roads, that the army, though very little harassed on its march by the Americans, did not arrive on the Hudson, in the neighbourhood of fort Edward, till the 30th of July. Here it was necessary again to halt, in order to bring from fort George provisions, batteaux to be used on the Hudson, artillery, and other materials necessary to enable him to proceed in the expedition.

The time afforded by this delay had been em-

ployed by Schuyler to the utmost advantage. Some reinforcements of fresh continental troops, though not all which were expected, had been received from Peeks-kill; and though the critical season of the year, it being harvest time, together with the dislike to him prevailing in New England, prevented the militia from turning out in considerable numbers, they appeared in sufficient force to make a respectable addition to the regular army. But the loss of all the salt provisions was severely felt. Unaccustomed to the use of fresh meat only, the American soldiers, when confined to it, became very sickly; and this cause tended still more to diminish a force already too inconsiderable to afford a reasonable prospect of success in a contest with the enemy opposed to them. On this account, as Burgoyne approached fort Edward, Schuyler retired over the Hudson to Saratoga, a few miles below that place. From thence General Lincoln was dispatched to take the command of the militia assembling at Manchester under Colonel Warner, but who had not yet appeared in sufficient force to enable that officer to inspire the enemy with fears for their rear.

From Saratoga General Schuyler retired to Stillwater, not far from the mouth of the Mohawk, where he ordered General Lincoln to join him, and fortified his camp, in the hope of being strong enough to defend it, before the enemy could approach him.

While at Stillwater, information was obtained that General Burgoyne had entirely evacuated Castletown, so that no communication was kept up with Tinconderoga, but through lake George, from whence nearly all his supplies were at present drawn; and that the garrison of that important place consisted only of three hundred men. In consequence of this intelligence, the orders to General Lincoln were countermanded, and he was directed, with the militia of New Hampshire, of Massachussetts, and of the Grants, making, as was understood, a total of between two and three thousand men, to fall entirely in the rear of the enemy, and, if possible, cut off their communication with the lakes. This movement it was supposed would compel Burgoyne to weaken his army by detachments, either to reinforce the parts in his rear, or to attack Lincoln. Here too he was informed that Colonel St. Leger, with a large body of Indians, in addition to his regulars, had penetrated from Oswego by the way of Oneida lake and Wood creek to the Mohawk, where he had laid siege to fort Schuyler, and had totally defeated General Herkemer, who had raised the militia of Tryon county, in order to relieve the fort. The importance of covering the inhabitants from the savages, of preventing, if possible, a junction between St. Leger and Burgoyne, and the consequent total loss of the country on the Mohawk,

determined

determined Schuyler, weak as he was, to detach Major-general Arnold, with three continental regiments, to raise the siege. The army was so enfeebled by this detachment, that its removal to a place of greater security was deemed absolutely necessary; and on the 15th of August it was withdrawn a few miles further from the enemy, to some islands in the confluence of the Hudson and the Mohawk, where the camp was deemed more defensible than that which had been abandoned. Burgoyne had now marched down the east side of the Hudson, and his advanced parties had crossed the river, and occupied the ground at Saratoga.

On the second of August, the approach of Colonel St. Leger was discovered at fort Schuyler, and the next day he invested that place. The fort was garrisoned by about six hundred continental troops from New York and Massachussetts, under the command of Colonel Gansevoort. The besieging army amounted from fifteen to eighteen hundred men, of whom, from six to nine hundred were Indians, and the others were British, Germans, Canadians, and Americans. A message vaunting of his strength, and demanding a surrender, was sent in by Colonel St. Leger, which was answered by Gansevoort with a declaration that he would defend the fort to the last extremity.

On the first approach of the enemy, General Herkemer, who commanded the militia of Tryon county,

county, assembled them in considerable force for the purpose of relieving the garrison. About eleven o'clock on the 6th, a messenger from his camp at Eriska, distant about eight miles, got into the fort with a letter, giving the intelligence of his situation, and of his intention to endeavour on that day, to force his way through the enemy and join the garrison. It was immediately determined to favour the execution of this design, by a vigorous sortie; and upwards of two hundred men, under Lieutenant-colonel Willet, were drawn out for that purpose.

Unfortunately, St. Leger had received information the preceding day from his advanced parties, of the approach of Herkemer; and had formed the plan of intercepting him. For this purpose, early in the morning, a strong detachment of regulars and Indians advanced towards him, and lay in ambuscade on the road by which he was to march. Herkemer fell into this ambuscade. The first notice he received of it was, a heavy discharge of small arms, which was followed by a furious attack from the Indians with their tomahawks. Though some of the militia fled on the first onset, he defended himself with resolution, but, unable to maintain his ground, his party was defeated with great slaughter. The general and several of the field officers were wounded; many others, among whom were several of the committee men, and leading

leading political characters of the country, were killed or taken prisoners. The loss was estimated at about four hundred men. The destruction was prevented from being rendered still more complete, by the timely sortie made by Lieutenant-colonel Willet, which checked the pursuit, and recalled the enemy to the defence of their own camp.

So soon as the intelligence was received that Herkemer was advancing, the sortie, which had been promptly resolved on, was as promptly executed. Lieutenant-colonel Willet fell on the camp of the enemy, and being entirely unexpected, routed them on the first onset; drove them, some into the woods, and others across the river; and brought off a number of camp kettles, blankets, and muskets, besides several Indian weapons, and other articles greatly valued among them. A party of regulars endeavoured to form an ambuscade, and to cut off his return to the fort; but he discovered and defeated the attempt. With a field piece which accompanied him, he played on them with grape shot, in addition to which, he attacked them with his musketry and entirely dispersed them; after which he returned to the fort without the loss of a single man, having killed several of the enemy, among whom were some of the Indian chiefs.

Elated with the defeat of Herkemer, Colonel St.

St. Leger demanded a surrender of the fort, in terms manifesting the danger to which both the garrison and country would be exposed, from the resentment of the Indians, in case of further resistance; a resentment which he had with infinite difficulty repressed for the moment; but which he should be unable longer to restrain, if the opposition should be continued. This message, which was at first verbal, to be delivered by Colonel Butler, his adjutant-general, Colonel Gansevoort refused to receive; and the demand was the next day repeated in writing. Gansevoort, with equal modesty and firmness, replied, that being entrusted by the United States of America with the charge of the garrison of fort Schuyler, he was determined to defend the place to the last extremity, against all enemies whatever, without any concern for the consequences of doing his duty.

On receiving this answer the firing on the fort recommenced, and St. Leger addressed a letter to General Burgoyne, informing him of the defeat of Herkemer. The militia, he said, could not rally again to molest him, and his only apprehensions were from continental troops, who might come up the Mohawk to the relief of the fort. He therefore suggested a rapid movement on the American army below him.

Burgoyne, who had been incessantly employed from the 30th of July, in bringing forward batteaux,

batteaux, provisions, and ammunition, from fort George to the nearest navigable part of the Hudson, a distance of only eighteen miles, but through roads of extreme difficulty, was already informed of the arrival of Colonel St. Leger before fort Schuyler: but the obstacles to his further progress now multiplied every day, and each step produced new embarrassments.

Not more than one third of the draught horses contracted for in Canada had arrived. This was not imputable to any neglect in those to whom the agency of that business had been confided, but to the natural accidents attending so long and intricate a combination of land and water carriage. Schuyler had taken the precaution to remove as much as possible out of his reach the horses and draught cattle of the country, so that from this source his supplies were by no means adequate to his wants. He had, indeed, secured fifty teams of oxen, but such was the badness of the roads, rendered much worse by the great quantities of rain which had fallen, that it was often necessary to employ ten or twelve oxen on a single batteaux. Even with these aids, and with unremitting labour, he had only brought over twelve batteaux into the Hudson, and provisions for the army for four days in advance, by the 15th of August.*

* Letter of Burgoyne.

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An immediate and rapid movement down the Hudson had suggested itself to the British general as a measure of the utmost importance. In that event, the American army would not, he conceived, march up the Mohawk, because such a movement would place it between his army and that of St. Leger, and would leave Albany totally uncovered. It must, therefore, either risk a general action, retreat before him, or cross the Hudson into New England. Either of these events he considered as opening the whole Mohawk country to St. Leger, and securing a junction of the two armies.*

The great difficulty attending the execution of his plan, and which alone embarrassed him, was, how to provision his army till it should reach the fertile and abundant country below him. The difficulty of drawing supplies from fort George, would every day increase with the increasing distance, and additional postage; and the communication, already endangered by a large body of militia, assembling at White creek, could only be secured by larger detachments from his army than he was in a condition to make; the proposed movement, therefore, must either be abandoned, or some other mode of supply attempted.† The latter part of the alternative was embraced.

* Letter of Burgoyne. † Ibid.

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It was well known that the principal part of the live cattle with which the American army was supplied, was drawn from New England, and passed through Manchester, Arlington, and other parts of the Hampshire grants, to Bennington, from whence they were occasionally conveyed to the American camp. A large depôt of corn and of carriages had been also made at the same place, which was generally guarded by militia, varying from day to day in numbers. The possession of these magazines would enable the British general to prosecute his further plans, without a reliance on supplies from lake George; and he determined, if practicable, to surprise and seize them.*

Licutenant-colonel Baum, with about five hundred men, was detached on this service. He had before been selected for a much more extensive expedition. He had been destined to command a foraging party which should proceed near the borders of Connecticut river, recruiting the provincial corps on its way, and collecting horses and provisions for the army; after which, he was to join General Burgoyne at Albany. It does not appear whether the expedition to Bennington was only a part of this larger scheme, or contituted in itself the sole object for which Baum was at present detached.

* Letter of Burgoyne.

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In order to facilitate this enterprise, and be ready to take advantage of its success, the movement had been made down the east side of the river, and a bridge of rafts had been thrown over the Hudson for the passage of his van, which had taken post at Saratoga. At the same time Lieutenant-colonel Brehman with his corps, consisting of Brunswick grenadiers, light infantry, and chasseurs, was advanced to Batten hill, in order, if necessary, to support Colonel Baum.*

On approaching Bennington, it was discovered that a much more considerable force was collected there than had been suspected. The New Hampshire militia under General Starke had fortunately reached that place on their way to camp, and uniting with Colonel Warner, who, to the remnant of his continental regiment which had been engaged with General Frazer, after the evacuation of Ticonderoga, added a few of the neighbouring militia, made in the whole about two thousand men.

Perceiving the danger of his situation, Baum halted, about four miles from Bennington, and dispatched an express for a reinforcement. In the mean time he strengthened himself as well as was in his power by intrenchments.

Lieutenant-colonel Brehman was immediately

* Letter of Burgoyne.

ordered to his assistance; but such was the state of the roads, that, though the distance was only twenty-four miles, and he continued his march unremittingly from eight o'clock in the morning of the 15th, he did not reach the ground where Baum had been encamped, till four in the afternoon of the next day.*

In the mean time General Starke, either knowing or suspecting that a reinforcement was marching to the aid of Baum, determined to attack his party in their intrenchments. He accordingly advanced against them, and such was the confidence of the provincials in Colonel Baum's party, in the attachment of the country to the royal cause, that while the dispositions for the attack were making, the American troops were mistaken for armed friends coming to join them. This error was soon discovered by Colonel Baum, who prepared for the contest, and made a very brave resistance. His works, however, were carried by assault, and great part of his detachment killed or taken prisoners. A few escaped into the woods, and saved themselves by flight.

Brehman, who had advanced very near the ground on which this action was fought, without having received the smallest information of it, came up during the pursuit, and meeting the scat-

* Letter of Burgoyne.

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tered remnant of Baum's corps, obtained from them the first intelligence of the disaster which had befallen him. The militia, entirely unapprehensive of danger, and unsuspicious of the approach of a new enemy, are said to have been generally dispersed, collecting plunder, while a few continued to pursue the fugitives. There was not only much danger of losing all the advantages of the day, and that what had been gained from Baum would be recovered by Brehman, but that the magazines, which had been the object of the expedition, would fall into the hands of that officer.

Fortunately, at this critical juncture, Colonel Warner * came up with his continental regiment, and advanced upon the enemy, who had already driven back such parties of the militia as had been engaged in pursuing the remnant of Baum's corps. He restored and continued the action, till the main body of the militia reassembled, and came up to support him. Brehman was now compelled to give way. He kept up the action, however, till dark, by which time his ammunition, though forty rounds had been delivered to each man, was very nearly expended. Abandoning his artillery and baggage, he then saved his party under cover of the night.

In this action one thousand stand of arms, a

* Gordon.

very important supply for the militia, and nine hundred swords, were taken.

General Burgoyne represented his loss in men at about four hundred; but thirty-two officers, and five hundred and sixty-four privates, including Canadians and Tories, were made prisoners. The number of the dead was not ascertained, because the action with Brehman had been in the woods, and had been kept up for several miles.

The British general, therefore, must have included in his estimate of loss only his European troops.

This important success was soon followed by another of no less decisive influence on the fate of the campaign.

Fort Schuyler was fortified with more skill, and defended with more courage, than St. Leger had expected. His artillery made no impression on the walls, and his Indians, who were much better pleased with obtaining plunder and scalps, than with besieging fortresses, became very intractable. Their loss in the battles with Herkemer and Willet sat heavy on them, and they manifested much disgust with the service. In this state of mind, they received information that Arnold was advancing on them with a large body of continental troops; and not long afterwards were told that General Burgoyne and his army were totally defeated; a report very probably founded on the

affair

affair at Bennington. They were by no means disposed to share the ill-fortune of their friends, and shewed very clearly a determination not to wait the arrival of Arnold. To prevail on them to continue with him, Colonel St. Leger flattered their chiefs, by consulting them respecting his future operations, and called them together in council, with the hope that they might be detained by the influence of Sir John Johnson, and the superintendants of Indian affairs, who accompanied him. He was mistaken: while the council was sitting, a part of them decamped, and all the rest threatened immediately to follow.

There was no longer time for deliberation. The siege was raised, and the camp broke up, with circumstances indicating excessive alarm. The tents were left standing, and the artillery, with great part of the baggage, ammunition, and provisions, fell into the hands of the Americans. They were pursued by a detachment from the garrison, and it was stated by deserters that the Indians plundered the remaining baggage of the officers, and massacred such soldiers as could not keep up with the line of march.

Colonel St. Leger returned to Montreal, from whence he proceeded to Ticonderoga, with the intention of joining General Burgoyne by that route.

The decisive victory obtained at Bennington,

and the retreat of St. Leger from fort Schuyler, however important in themselves, were still more so in their consequences. The deduction from the force of the enemy was an advantage of real magnitude. The liberation of the whole Mohawk country, by an event which as effectually excluded the invading army from further participating in the campaign, as if it had been captured, and which enabled the Americans to unite all their forces in the northern department against Burgoyne, contributed materially to the brilliant successes which followed. Their operation on public opinion was, perhaps, not less essential. The militia, and even the continental troops, recovered that confidence in themselves which a continued series of misfortunes had greatly diminished. An army which had heretofore spread terror and dismay in every direction, which had before experienced no reverse of fortune, was considered as already beaten; and the opinion became common, that it was now only necessary for the great body of the militia to appear in arms, and the emancipation of their country would be certain, by the destruction of an army from which so much had been feared. Nor was it an advantage undeserving a place in the estimate of consequences resulting from this change of public opinion, that the disaffected became timid, and the wavering, who, during the torrent of success, would have made a merit

merit of contributing their aid to the victor, were no longer disposed to put themselves and their fortunes in hazard, to support an army whose fate was so uncertain.

The savage barbarities too, which had been perpetrated by the Indians belonging to the army of Burgoyne, as well as to that of St. Leger, excited more resentment than terror. As the prospect of revenge began to open, the effect of those barbarities became the more apparent, and their influence on the royal cause was the more sensibly felt, because they were indiscriminate. The murder of Miss Maccrea, an accomplished young lady, engaged to a British officer, passed through all the papers of the continent; and the story, in itself sufficiently affecting, being retouched by the hand of more than one master, excited every where a peculiar degree of sensibility.* But there were

* Justice to the unfortunate demands that an extract from the correspondence between Generals Burgoyne and Gates, on this subject should be inserted.

The British general had complained of the harsh treatment experienced by the provincial prisoners taken at Bennington, and requested that a surgeon from his army should be permitted to visit the wounded, and that he might be allowed to furnish them with necessaries and attendants. "Duty and principle," he added, "make me a public enemy to the Americans who have taken up arms, but I seek to be a generous one, nor have I the shadow of resentment against any individual, who does not induce it by acts derogatory to those

other causes of still greater influence in producing the events which afterwards took place. The last

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maxims, on which all men of honour think alike." In answer to this letter, General Gates, who had just taken the command of the American army, said, "That the savages of America should, in their warfare, mangle and scalp the unhappy prisoners who fell into their hands, is neither new nor extraordinary; but that the famous Lieutenant-general Burgoyne, in whom the fine gentleman is united with the soldier and the scholar, should hire the savages of America to scalp Europeans, and the descendants of Europeans; nay more, that he should pay a price for each scalp so barbarously taken, is more than will be believed in Europe, until authenticated facts shall, in every gazette, confirm the truth of the horrid tale.

"Miss Maccrea, a young lady, lovely to the sight, of virtuous character, and amiable disposition, engaged to an officer of your army, was, with other women and children, taken out of a house near fort Edward, carried into the woods, and there scalped and mangled in a most shocking manner. Two parents, with their six children, were all treated with the same inhumanity, while quietly residing in their once happy and peaceful dwelling. The miserable fate of Miss Maccrea was particularly aggravated, by her being dressed to receive her promised husband, but met her murderer employed by you. Upwards of one hundred men, women, and children, have perished by the hands of the ruffians to whom, it is asserted, you have paid the price of blood."

To this part of his letter General Burgoyne replied, "I have hesitated, sir, in answering the other paragraphs of your letter. I disdain to justify myself against the rhapsodies of fiction and calumny, which, from the first of this contest, has been an invaried American policy to propagate, but which

no

reinforcements of continental troops arrived in camp about this time, and added both courage and

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no longer imposes on the world. I am induced to deviate from this general rule in the present instance, lest my silence should be construed into an acknowledgment of the truth of your allegations, and a pretence be thence taken for exercising future barbarities by the American troops.

"By this motive, and on this only, I condescend to inform you, that I would not be conscious of the acts you presume to impute to me, for the whole continent of America, though the wealth of worlds were in its bowels, and a paradise upon its surface.

"It has happened, that all my transactions with the Indian nations last year and this, have been clearly heard, distinctly understood, accurately minuted, by very numerous, and in many parts very unprejudiced persons. So immediately opposite to truth is your assertion that I have paid a price for scalps, that one of the first regulations established by me at the great council in May, and repeated and enforced, and invariably adhered to since, was, that the Indians should receive compensation for prisoners, because it would prevent cruelty; and that not only such compensation should be withheld, but a strict account demanded for scalps. These pledges of conquest, for such you well know they will ever esteem them, were solemnly and peremptorily prohibited to be taken from the wounded, and even the dying, and the persons of aged men, women, children, and prisoners, were pronounced sacred, even in assaults.

"In regard to Miss Maccrea, her fall wanted not the tragic display you have laboured to give it, to make it as sincerely abhorred and lamented by me, as it can be by the most tender of her friends. The fact was no premeditated barbarity; on the contrary, two chiefs, who had brought her off for

strength to the army. The harvest, which had operated powerfully in detaining the northern militia upon the farms, was entirely over, and General Schuyler, whose continued and eminent services had not exempted him from the imputation of being a traitor, was succeeded by General Gates, who possessed a large share of the public confidence.

When Schuyler was directed by Congress to re-

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for the purpose of security, not of violence to her person, disputed which should be her guard, and in a fit of savage passion in one, from whose hands she was snatched, the unhappy woman became the victim. Upon the first intelligence of this event, I obliged the Indians to deliver the murderer into my hands, and though to have punished him by our laws, or principles of justice, would have been perhaps unprecedented, he certainly should have suffered an ignominious death, had I not been convinced, from my circumstances and observation, beyond the possibility of doubt, that a pardon under the terms which I presented and they accepted, would be more efficacious than an execution to prevent similar mischiefs.

"The above instance excepted, your intelligence respecting the cruelties of the Indians is false.

"You seem to threaten me with European publications, which affect me as little as any other threats you could make; but in regard to American publications, whether your charge against me, which I acquit you of believing, was penned *from* a gazette, or *for* a gazette, I desire and demand of you, as a man of honour, that should it appear in print at all, this answer may follow it."

sume

sume the command of the northern department, Gates had withdrawn himself from it, after which he had repaired to head-quarters, and joined the army under General Washington. When the resolutions were passed, directing an inquiry into the conduct of Schuyler and St. Clair, appointing a committee to report on the mode of conducting the inquiry, and in the mean while recalling them and all the brigadiers who had served in that department, General Washington was requested to name a successor to Schuyler. On his expressing a wish to decline this nomination, and representing the inconvenience of removing all the general officers from the department, Gates was again directed to repair thither and take the command, and the resolution to recall the brigadiers was suspended, till the commander in chief should be of opinion that it might be carried into effect with safety.

Schuyler retained the command till the arrival of Gates, which was about the 21st of August, and continued his exertions, to restore the affairs of the department, which had been so much depressed by the losses consequent on the evacuation of Ticonderoga. That officer felt acutely the disgrace of being recalled in this critical and interesting state of the campaign. "It is," said he, in a letter to the commander in chief, "matter of extreme chagrin to me to be deprived of the command

mand at a time when we shall probably be enabled soon to face the enemy; when we are on the point of taking ground* where they must attack to a disadvantage, should our force be inadequate to facing them in the field; when an opportunity will in all probability occur, in which I might evince that I am not what Congress have too plainly insinuated by the resolution which takes the command from me."

If error be attributable to the evacuation of Ticonderoga, certainly no portion of it was committed by Schuyler. His removal from the command was probably unjust and severe, as the measure respected himself; but perhaps wise as it respected America. The great force relied on for the defence of the frontier towards the lakes, was to be drawn from New England; and however unfounded their prejudices might be, it was prudent to consult them.

Happily, Burgoyne remained steady to his purpose. The disasters at Bennington, and on the Mohawk, produced no disposition to abandon the enterprise and save his army. He still entertained the hope of accomplishing the great object of the campaign, and resolved to persevere in his endeavours to execute the plan which, with his assistance, had been formed in the British cabinet, and to obey the orders he had willingly received.

* The islands in the mouth of the Mohawk.

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It was now necessary to recur to his original slow and toilsome mode of obtaining supplies from fort George, and to this object he applied with unremitting industry. Having with great care, and with persevering labour, collected in advance provisions for thirty days, and thrown a bridge of boats over the Hudson, that made of rafts being carried away by a swell of water, he crossed that river the 13th and 14th of September, and encamped on the heights and plains of Saratoga,* with the determination of deciding in a general engagement the fate of the expedition.

General Gates, who was now joined by all the continental troops destined for the northern department, and reinforced by strong corps of militia, had left his camp in the islands, and advanced towards the enemy as far as the neighbourhood of Stillwater.

The bridges between the two armies were broken down, and required to be repaired. The roads were excessively bad, and the country covered with woods: of consequence, the progress of the British army down the river was slow, and attended with skirmishing, in which however no great loss was sustained on either side. On the night of the 17th, Burgoyne encamped within four miles of the American army, and the next day was em-

* Letter of Burgoyne.

ployed

ployed in repairing the bridges between the two camps.* This was effected with some loss, and about noon on the 19th, General Gates was informed that the enemy was advancing in full force on his left, where Arnold commanded.

Colonel Morgan was detached to observe their motions, and to harass them as they advanced. He soon fell in with their piquets in front of the right wing, which was commanded by General Burgoyne in person. The piquets were composed chiefly of Indians, Canadians, and provincials, and being attacked sharply by Morgan, were soon driven in. A strong corps was brought up to support them, and, after a severe encounter, Morgan in turn was compelled to give way. A regiment was ordered to assist him, and the action soon became more general. An attempt was made to gain the right flank of the British lines, but finding it covered by a brigade under General Frazer, the attack was changed to the left of the right wing, where it was made with great animation. Reinforcements were continually brought up, and about four o'clock, Arnold, with nine continental regiments and Morgan's corps, was completely engaged with the whole right wing of the British army. The conflict was extremely severe, and only terminated with the day. At dark, the

* Letter of Burgoyne.

Americans

Americans retired to their camp, and the British, who had found great difficulty in maintaining their ground, lay all night on their arms, within about half a mile of the field of battle.

In this action, the killed and wounded, on the part of the Americans, were between three and four hundred. Among the former were Colonels Coburn and Adams, and several other valuable officers. The loss of the enemy was, as usual, believed to be much more considerable,* and a report was circulated, which gained credit every where, that General Burgoyne, who had through the day exposed his person to every danger, was among the wounded.

Each army claimed the victory, and each believed itself to have beaten, with only part of its force, nearly the whole of the enemy. The advantage, however, considering every circumstance, was decidedly with the Americans. In a conflict which nearly consumed the day, they found themselves fully equal to their antagonists. In every quarter they had been the assailants, and, after an encounter for several hours, they had not lost an inch of ground. They had not been driven from the field, but had retired from it, at the close of day, to the camp from which they had marched to

* It appears from statements since made, that their loss exceeded five hundred men in killed and wounded.

battle,

battle. Their object, which was to check the enemy advancing on them, had been obtained; while that of the British general, which was to force their position, had totally failed. In the present state of things, to fight without being beaten was, on their part, victory; while, on the part of the enemy, to fight without a decisive victory, was defeat. The Indians, who found themselves beaten in the woods by Morgan, and checked by Burgoyne in their scalping and plundering the unarmed; who saw before them the prospect of a great deal of hard fighting without profit, grew tired of the service, and deserted in great numbers. The Canadians and provincials were not much more faithful, and it was soon perceived that the hopes of the British general must rest, almost entirely, on his European troops.

With reason, therefore, this action was celebrated through the United States, and considered as the precursor of the total ruin of the invading army. Every where the utmost exultation was displayed, and every where the militia were stimulated to fly to arms, and complete the work which was begun.

The next day, intelligence was received from the north, which tended still further to raise the spirits of the troops.

It has been already stated, that General Lincoln was detached to form the militia, as they came up from

from the north-western parts of New England, in the rear of the enemy; and that Ticonderoga was comprehended in his plan of operations. He had assembled a considerable force at Manchester, from whence he marched to Pawlet, a small village on a river of that name, which runs into Wood creek.

Here he divided his troops into three parties of about five hundred men each, and detached Colonel Browne, at the head of one of them, to the north end of lake George, principally to relieve a number of prisoners who were confined there; but with orders to push his success, if he should be fortunate, as far as prudence would admit. Colonel Johnson, at the head of another party, marched towards mount Independence; and Colonel Woodbury, with a third, was detached to Skeensborough, to cover the retreat of both the others. With the residue of the militia, Lincoln proceeded to join Gates.

After marching all night, Colonel Brown arrived about break of day on the north end of the lake, where he fell in with a small post, which he carried without opposition. The enemy were completely surprised, and he took possession of mount Defiance, mount Hope, the old French lines, the landing, and about two hundred batteaux. One hundred American prisoners were liberated, and two hundred and ninety-three of the enemy captured, with the loss of only three killed, and five

wounded. This success was joyfully proclaimed through all the northern country. It was believed confidently, that Ticonderoga and mount Independence were recovered, and the militia were exhorted, by joining their brethren in the army, to ensure that event, if it had not already happened.

The attempt on those places however failed. The garrison refused to surrender, and when attacked, repulsed the assailants. After employing a few days ineffectually in endeavouring to take them, the militia gave over the attempt, and returning through lake George, in the vessels they had captured, made an attack on Diamond island, which Burgoyne, on crossing the Hudson, had made the depôt of all the stores collected at the south end of the lake, that being a place of greater security than fort George. Here they were repulsed with some loss, after which they abandoned and destroyed the vessels they had taken, and returned to their former station.*

The day after the battle near Stillwater, General Burgoyne, who took a position almost within cannon shot of the American camp, fortified his right, and extended his left to the extremity of the river hills, so as to cover the meadow through which the river runs, in which his batteaux and hospital were placed. For greater security, two

* Remembrancer.

European

European regiments, and a corps of provincials, were encamped in the meadow on the 21st of September. Directly after taking this ground, he received a letter of the 10th, from Sir Henry Clinton, informing him that about the 20th of September he should attack fort Montgomery. This messenger returned with information of the pressing necessity of the army for aid, and that he should endeavour to wait for it till the 12th of October.*

General Gates, whose numbers increased daily, remained on his old ground. His right, which extended to the river, had been rendered unassailable, and he used great industry to strengthen his left.

Both armies retained their position till the 7th of October: Burgoyne, in the hope of being relieved by Sir Henry Clinton; and Gates, in the confidence of growing stronger every day, and of rendering the destruction of his enemy more certain.

Having received no further intelligence from Sir Henry Clinton, and having found it necessary for four days past to diminish the ration issued to his soldiers, the British general determined to make one more trial of strength with his adversary. A victory might enable him to advance

* Letter of Burgoyne.

rapidly down the river; even partial success might remove the American army to a greater distance, so as to favour his retreat, and cover a foraging party sent out to obtain supplies for his wants, which were daily becoming more urgent.*

In order to execute this determination, on the 7th of October he drew out, on his right, fifteen hundred regular troops, with two twelve pounders, two howitzers, and six six-pounders. This body, with which he designed to commence the action, he commanded in person, assisted by Generals Philips, Reidesel, and Frazer. The defence of the camp on the heights was committed to Brigadiers Hamilton and Specht, and that of the redoubts in the plain to Brigadier Gall.†

The right wing was formed within three quarters of a mile of the left of the American camp, and a corps of rangers, Indians, and provincials, was pushed on through secret paths to appear in their rear, in order to check and embarrass their operations.‡

These movements were perceived by General Gates, who immediately determined on attacking the British left, and endeavouring to separate it from the right wing of their army. The attack was made suddenly, and in great force. At first, the principal weight of fire was directed against

* Letter of Burgoyne. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

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the left flank, where the British grenadiers were posted, but soon extended all along the front, so as to prevent the Germans from aiding them.

At the same time, three regiments from the left, where Major-general Arnold commanded, came out to attack the front of the enemy's right, and a second division endeavoured to intercept its return to the camp. The British light infantry under General Frazer, with part of the twenty-fourth regiment, were ordered to form a second line, in order to cover the light infantry of the right, and secure a retreat. While this movement was making, the left of the right of the enemy was compelled to give way, and the light infantry was ordered to make a rapid movement to their assistance. In making it, they fell in with the rifle corps, which attacked them with great effect, and General Frazer was mortally wounded. In the mean time, Arnold pressed hard on the right under Burgoyne, which, with great difficulty, and with the loss of the field-pieces, and great part of the artillery corps, made good its retreat to the camp. The Americans followed close in their rear, and, under a tremendous fire of grape-shot and musketry, assaulted the works throughout their whole extent from right to left. Towards the close of the day, a part of the left forced the intrenchments, and General Arnold, with a few men, actually entered the works; but his horse

was killed under him, and he was himself very badly wounded in the same leg which had suffered at Quebec. Those who had entered the lines with him, were forced out of them; and, it being now nearly dark, they desisted from the attack.

The left of Arnold's detachment was still more successful. Jackson's regiment of Massachussetts, then led by Lieutenant-colonel Brooks, turned the right of the encampment, and stormed the works occupied by the German reserve. Lieutenant-colonel Brehman, who commanded in them, was killed, and the works were carried with less difficulty than the assailants had expected. The orders given by Burgoyne to recover them were not executed, and Brooks maintained the ground he had gained.

Darkness, as in the engagement of the nineteenth, put an end to the action; and the Americans lay all night on their arms, about half a mile from the lines, ready to renew the assault next day. The advantage they had gained was decisive. They had taken several pieces of artillery, killed a great number of the enemy, made upwards of two hundred prisoners, among whom were several officers of distinction; and penetrated their lines in a part which exposed their rear to considerable danger.

Burgoyne could not risk the events of the next day on the same ground. In the course of the night,

night, he changed his position entirely, and drew his whole army into the strong camp on the river heights near the hospital, extending his right up the river. This movement extricated him from the imminent danger of being attacked with the return of day, under the disadvantage of part of his works being already in possession of the assailants.

General Gates perceived the strength of Burgoyne's present position, and did not mean to put so much to hazard as would be risked by attempting to force it. Understanding perfectly that it would be impossible for the enemy to subsist many days, without either defeating his army, or making good their retreat to lake George, he determined, while the security of the main army was not forgotten, to take such precautions, and throw such a force over the river, as would render a retreat to the lakes impracticable. With this view, on the 8th of October, a strong detachment was put in motion for the purpose of taking a position higher up the Hudson, so as to intercept the British army in its retreat; while strong corps were posted on the other side of the river to annoy them from that quarter, and prevent their passing it.

This movement compelled Burgoyne again to change his position. To avoid having the road in his rear entirely closed upon him, it was necessary to retire immediately to Saratoga. About

nine o'clock at night, the retreat was commenced, and was effected with the loss of his hospital, containing about three hundred sick; and of several batteaux laden with provision and baggage. His march was marked with a devastation not to be accounted for. As if disposed to destroy a country he could not conquer, all the dwelling houses on his route were reduced to ashes.

A heavy rain, which procrastinated the retreat of the enemy so much, that Fish-kill creek, which lies a little to the north of Saratoga, was not crossed till the morning of the tenth, also suspended the pursuit. On reaching the ground proposed to be occupied, a strong corps was found already intrenched on the opposite side of the river, prepared to dispute its passage. Their advanced party, which had commenced throwing up works on the very heights where the British army afterwards encamped, retired on its approach, and rejoined the main body on the east of the Hudson.

When the rain ceased, General Gates commenced the pursuit; but the enemy had broken down all the bridges in their rear, and consequently some time elapsed in overtaking them.

From Saratoga, a company of artificers, under an escort consisting of a regiment of regulars, the marksmen, and a corps of provincials, was detached to repair the roads and bridges towards fort Edward, in order to enable the army to continue

tinue its march. This party had scarcely been detached, when the Americans appeared in force on the heights on the other side the creek, and made dispositions which excited the apprehension of an intention to cross it and attack them. The Europeans escorting the artificers were immediately recalled, and the provincial corps, now the only remaining guard for the workmen, being attacked by a small party, ran away on the first fire, and left them to shift for themselves.

No hope of repairing the roads now remained; and of consequence, it was impossible to move the baggage and artillery of the army.

About the same time, the boats containing the provisions were found so much exposed in the river, the opposite shore of which was lined with armed Americans, that it was deemed indispensable to the safety of the small stock on hand, to land and convey it up the hill into the camp.*

The British army was now almost completely environed by a superior force. No means remained of extricating itself from difficulties and dangers which were continually increasing, other than by fording a river, on the opposite bank of which a formidable body of troops was already posted; and then escaping to fort George, through roads impassable by artillery, or waggons, with

* Letter of Burgoyne.

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an army flushed with victory, pressing close in the rear.* This desperate condition of their affairs was perfectly understood by Gates. He thought it not improbable that Burgoyne, after abandoning all his baggage and artillery, might attempt to make a rapid retreat in the night, up the Hud-

* Mr. Gordon, in his history of the war, states himself to have received an anecdote from General Glover, proving that all the present advantages of the American generals, were on the point of being exposed to very imminent hazard. "On the morning of the 11th, Gates called the general officers together, and informed them of his having received certain intelligence which might be depended on, that the main body of Burgoyne's army was marched off for fort Edward, with what they could take; and that a rear guard only was left in the camp, who, after a while, was to push off as fast as possible, leaving the heavy baggage behind. On this it was concluded to advance and attack the camp in half an hour. The officers repaired immediately to their respective commands. General Nixon's being the eldest brigade, crossed the Saratoga creek first. Unknown to the Americans, Burgoyne had a line formed behind a parcel of brush-wood, to support the post of artillery where the attack was to be made. General Glover was upon the point of following Nixon. Just as he entered the water, he saw a British soldier making across, whom he called and examined." This soldier was a deserter, and communicated the very important fact, that the whole British army were in their encampment. Nixon was immediately stopped, and the intelligence conveyed to Gates, who countermanded his orders for the assault, and called back his troops, not without sustaining some loss from the British artillery.

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ton, and by recrossing that river, at or about fort Edward, to save the remainder of his army. To deprive the enemy of this last resource, a part of the troops on the east of the Hudson was ordered up to guard those fords, and in the event of their being attempted, to defend their passage till the arrival of the army. In addition to this precaution, an intrenched camp, furnished with artillery, was formed on the high grounds between fort Edward and fort George.

Gates was not mistaken in supposing that the enemy would resort to this their last refuge. In a council of general officers called to deliberate on their situation, the resolution was taken to abandon every thing but their arms, and a sufficient quantity of provisions merely to support them till they should reach fort George, which might be carried on their backs; and by a forced march in the night up the river, to extricate themselves from the American army; and crossing either at fort Edward, or at a ford above it, to press on to fort George.

This desperate resolution being taken, scouts were sent out to examine the route, who returned with information that those fords were already defended by strong parties. It would certainly have been found extremely difficult, if not impossible, to force them without artillery. This plan of retreat, therefore, was abandoned as impracticable.

An account of the provisions on hand was now directed to be taken, when it appeared that, even on short allowance, only a supply of three days remained in store.

Nothing could be more hopeless than the present condition of the British army, or more deplorable than that of their general, as described by himself.

In his letter to Lord George Germain, secretary of state for American affairs, he says, "A series of hard toil, incessant effort, stubborn action, till disabled in the collateral branches of the army, by the total defection of the Indians; the desertion or timidity of the Canadians and provincials, some individuals excepted; disappointed in the last hope of any co-operation from other armies; the regular troops reduced by losses from the best parts to three thousand five hundred effective men, not two thousand of whom were British; and only three days provisions, upon short allowance, in store; invested by an army of sixteen thousand men; and no appearance of retreat remaining; I called into council all the generals, field officers, and captains commanding corps, and by their unanimous concurrence and advice, I was induced to open a treaty with Major-general Gates."

A treaty was opened with a general proposition from Burgoyne, stating a willingness to spare the further

further effusion of blood, provided a negociation could be effected on hopourable terms.

This proposition was answered by a demand on the part of General Gates, that the whole army should ground their arms in their encampment, and surrender themselves prisoners of war. This demand was at once rejected, with a declaration, that if General Gates designed to insist on it, the negociation must immediately break off, and hostilities recommence. On receiving this decided answer, the rigorous terms at first proposed were receded from, and a convention was signed, on the 10th of October, by which it was agreed that the British army, after marching out of their encampment with all the honours of war, should lay down their arms, and not serve against the United States till exchanged. They were not to be detained in captivity, but to be permitted to embark for England.*

The situation of the British army considered,† these stipulations were unquestionably highly honourable to their general, and favourable to their nation. Their services were indeed lost for the residue of the present campaign, but in the next they might be replaced with other troops, whose

* Remembrancer.

† The army of General Gates consisted of 9093 continental troops. The number of the militia fluctuated, but they amounted, at the signature of the convention, to 4129. The sick exceeded 2500 men.

stations

stations they might fill without violating the treaty.

It is probable that terms so advantageous to them would not have been acceded to by General Gates, had he entertained no apprehensions from Sir Henry Clinton, who was now making the promised diversion on the North river, up which he had penetrated as far as Æsopus.

The draughts made of continental troops from Peeks-kill for both armies, had left that post in a situation to require the aid of militia for its security. On the arrival, in September, of a reinforcement of Europeans in New York, fears were immediately entertained for the highlands, and General Putnam, in conformity with his instructions, called for assistance on Connecticut and New York, the governor of which latter state was also the commanding officer in the forts. His requisitions were complied with, but the enemy not marching immediately against those posts, and the services of the militia being necessary at home to sow their farms, they became extremely impatient: many of them deserted, and General Putnam was induced to discharge the residue.

Impressed with the danger to which the forts were exposed from this measure, and entirely convinced, from the present state of both the British armies, that the attack must be made very soon, if at all, Governor Clinton immediately ordered

out

out half the militia of New York, with assurances that they should be relieved in one month by the other half. This order, to which a reluctant obedience was paid, was executed so slowly, that the forts were carried before the militia were in the field.

That post had always been in the opinion of the commander in chief an object of the first importance; and in no state of things, under no pressure of a superior force on the army commanded by himself, had he ceased to view it with interest, and to be attentive to its safety. When, therefore, his orders were given to make detachments from thence, in order to repel the incursions into Jersey, and to reinforce the army in Pennsylvania, so as to leave, according to the returns, less than three thousand men, including the militia; he, in the most explicit terms, stated his apprehension, that the enemy would attempt something up the North river. Under this impression, he directed that two thousand militia should be immediately called for from Connecticut to guard the passes through the mountains, while the forts themselves should be sufficiently garrisoned with the best troops. Great pains had been taken, and much labour employed, to render this position, which is by nature very strong, still more secure. The defences most relied on were forts Montgomery and Clinton, on the western bank of the Hudson, on very high ground, extremely difficult

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of access, and separated from each other by a small creek, which runs from the mountains into the river. These forts were too much elevated to be battered from the water, and the hills on which they were erected, too steep to be ascended by troops landing at the foot of them; and the mountains, which commence five or six miles below them, are so very high and rugged, the defiles through which the roads leading to them pass, so narrow, and commanded in such a manner by the heights on both sides, that the approaches to them are extremely difficult and dangerous.

To prevent the enemy from passing these forts, chevaux de frieze were sunk in the river, and a boom extended from bank to bank. This boom was covered with immense chains stretched at some distance in its front, for the purpose of breaking the force of any vessel sailing against it. The works were not only defended by the guns of the forts, but by a frigate and galleys stationed above them, capable of opposing with an equal fire in front any force which might attack them by water from below.

Fort Independence is four or five miles below forts Montgomery and Clinton, and on the opposite side of the river, on a high point of land; and fort Constitution is about six miles above them, on an island near the eastern shore.

The officer commanding at the station which comprehended the whole extent of the Hudson on both

both sides, from Albany to King's bridge, generally made his head quarters at Peeks-kill, just below fort Independence, and on the same side of the river. The garrison at this time amounted to about six hundred men, and the whole force under General Putnam, the militia having generally left him for the purposes of agriculture, did not much exceed two thousand. Yet this force, though so much less than that, which an attention to the orders of General Washington would have retained at the station, was, if properly applied, more than competent to the defence of the forts against any numbers which could be spared from New York. It was only by leading the attention of Putnam from the real object, and then assaulting and carrying them before they could be aided by his army, that an enterprise against them could succeed, and this Sir Henry Clinton resolved to attempt.

For this purpose, somewhat more than three thousand men embarked at New York. They landed on the fifth of October at Verplanks point, on the east side of the Hudson, a short distance below Peeks-kill, and General Putnam retired to the heights in his rear. On the evening of the same day, a part of the troops re-embarked, and the fleet moved up the river to Peeks-kill neck, in order to mask King's ferry, which was

then below them.* This is a convenient landing place, not far above which the mountains commence with steep and almost inaccessible declivities to the water edge. The next morning at break of day, the troops destined for the enterprise debarked † on the west side, at Stony point, and immediately commenced their march through the mountains into the rear of forts Clinton and Montgomery. The debarkation was not made unobserved, but the morning was so extremely foggy, that the numbers could not be distinguished; and a large fire, which was afterwards perceived at the landing place, led to the opinion, that a party had only gone on shore to burn some storehouses which had been erected there. In the mean time, the manœuvres of the vessels, and the appearance of the small detachment left at Verplanks point, persuaded General Putnam that the meditated attack was on fort Independence.

To this object his whole attention was directed, and it was not till the heavy firing from the other side of the river, announced to him the assault on forts Clinton and Montgomery, that the real views of the enemy were suspected. Five hundred men were immediately detached to reinforce the garrisons at those places, but before they could

* Letter of Sir Henry Clinton. † Ibid.

get

get over the river the works had been stormed, and were in possession of the British troops.

The enemy having left a battalion at the pass of Thunder hill, to keep up a communication with the fleet, and cover the retreat in case of misfortune, continued their march to the neighbourhood of fort Clinton. There they separated, and Lieutenant-colonel Campbell, with about nine hundred men, made a circuit round by the forest of Deane, to fall on the back of fort Montgomery; while General Vaughan, with about twelve hundred men, accompanied by Sir Henry Clinton in person, and followed by the rear guard under General Tryon, advanced slowly against fort Clinton.*

Governor Clinton, who commanded in the forts, having notice, about ten o'clock in the morning, of the approach of the enemy, made the best disposition in his power, and sent out as strong parties as his situation would admit, for the purpose of harassing them in their march through the defiles of the mountains, many of which, however, were already passed. He also sent an express to General Putnam to give notice of the danger which threatened him. Of this express Putnam makes no mention, but as he states

* Letter of Sir Henry Clinton.

himself to be returning with General Parsons from reconnoitring the position of the enemy on the east side of the river when the attack commenced, it is probable he might be engaged on that business when the express reached his camp.

The parties detached from the forts skirmished with the enemy, but most probably without much effect, as the column destined for fort Clinton was only met within two miles of its object, where a halt had been made, in order to wait for the arrival of that destined against fort Montgomery, the advance of which was not immediately perceived by the garrison. So soon as it was discovered, light parties were detached against that also, but it arrived without much loss before the fort, between four and five o'clock in the afternoon. The garrison, when summoned, having refused to surrender, the attack commenced about five on both forts. The approaches to each had been rendered extremely difficult by redoubts, by artillery, and by rows of abattis, extending for three or four hundred yards. The works were defended with resolution, and were maintained till dark, when the lines being too extensive to be completely manned, the enemy entered them in different places, and the defence being no longer possible, part of the garrisons were made prisoners, while their better knowledge of the country enabled others to escape. Governor Clinton passed the river

river in a boat, after the enemy were in possession of the forts; and General James Clinton, though wounded in the thigh by a bayonet, also made his escape. Lieutenant-colonels Livingston and Bruyn, and Majors Logan and Hamilton, were among the prisoners. The loss sustained by the garrisons was about two hundred and fifty men. That of the enemy was supposed to be much more considerable; but Sir Henry Clinton, in his official letter, states it at less than two hundred in killed, wounded, and missing. Among the former were Lieutenant-colonel Campbell, who commanded in the attack on fort Montgomery, and two other field officers.

The boom and chains across the river were taken possession of with the forts, and the continental frigates and gallies were burnt, to prevent them too from falling into the hands of the enemy.

As soon as Governor Clinton joined General Putnam, it was determined not to attempt the defence of Peeks-kill, but to remove as many of the stores as possible, and retire further up the river, till sufficient reinforcements could be collected.

Fort Independence and fort Constitution were evacuated the next day, and Putnam retreated to Fish-kill. The same measures had been taken at fort Constitution as at forts Clinton and Montgomery, by sinking impediments in the river, and by stretching chains across it to stop the vessels of the

enemy, but they were abandoned without even an attempt to defend them, and fell into the hands of the British general. After burning a continental village, where stores to a considerable amount had been deposited, General Vaughan, with a strong detachment, on the 15th of October proceeded up the river as far as Æsopus, which he also destroyed.

General Putnam, whose army was by this time increased by the militia of Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York, to six thousand men, detached General Parsons with two thousand, to repossess themselves of Peeks-kill, and the passes in the highlands, while with the residue he watched the progress of the enemy up the river. The want of heavy artillery, which had been sent for to the camp of Gates, and for which he waited, prevented his annoying their ships in the Hudson.

On the first intelligence of the capitulation of Burgoyne, expresses had been dispatched by Putnam to Gates, pressing for reinforcements of continental troops, and near five thousand men from that army hastened to his aid. Before their arrival, General Vaughan had proceeded from Æsopus down the river, and having reduced to ashes the forts Montgomery and Clinton, returned to New York, from whence a reinforcement was then about to sail for General Howe.

The military stores which this expedition threw into the hands of the enemy were very considerable.

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The highlands having been always considered as a position which, more than any other, united the advantages of convenience and security, magazines to a very large amount had been collected there. Some of these were removed, but by far the greater part of them were lost. Much labour and money had been expended on the forts, and on the works in the river, which had been demolished.

Though the injury sustained by the United States was considerable, very little benefit accrued to the enemy from this enterprise. It was undertaken at too late a period to save Burgoyne, and though they acquired the passes in the highlands, they were, in the present state of the armies, totally unable to hold them. They had reduced to ashes every village, and almost every private house within their power, but this wanton and useless destruction served to irritate without tending to subdue. A keenness was given to the resentment it excited, which perhaps outlasted the contest between the two nations.

The destruction of Burgoyne was in a great measure decided by the battle of the 19th of September, and could only have been prevented by his immediate retreat. The issue of that day had demonstrated to both armies that the continental troops under the command of General Gates were more than equal to him in the field, and it was not difficult to predict, that New England, more popu-

lous, more united, more zealous in the contest, and better armed than the middle states, would pour forth such auxiliary strength, as would be irresistible. That he did not immediately relinquish the enterprise as desperate, and return to the lakes, or their neighbourhood, is perhaps the only error committed by the British general. In the affair of Bennington, there was more of fortune than of ill-judgment. The presence of Stark with the New Hampshire militia was purely adventitious. This circumstance, which prevented the success of the expedition against the magazines of that place, and destroyed the party, was prepared by no previous arrangement. Without it Colonel Warner, who commanded about three hundred continental troops, would have been too weak to have defeated Baum, or prevented the execution of his designs at that place. It seems unjust to attribute to a commanding officer the ill success of an enterprise, of which the force was proportioned to the resistance that could reasonably have been expected, and which was defeated by one of those casualties that could neither be foreseen nor prevented. But the perseverance manifested in pursuing his object, after the battle of the 19th had fully disclosed the impracticability of attaining it without the co-operation of other armies, if not to be ascribed to positive orders, must have been occasioned either by that sanguine temper which trusts

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to fortune against all reasonable calculation, rather than forego brilliant prospects on which the imagination had dwelt with delight, or by a fear of censure from the ill-informed. This is a consideration which should weigh in the mind of a general as dust in the balance.

Burgoyne states his effective force when he capitulated at three thousand five hundred fighting men. The whole number which surrendered, according to the American computation, amounted to five thousand seven hundred and fifty-two. The one estimate probably excludes persons of every description, other than rank and file fit for duty, while the other comprehends all persons belonging to the camp. This army was calculated, on marching from Ticonderoga, at a total of nine thousand men. In addition to this great military force, the British lost, and the Americans acquired, a fine train of artillery, seven thousand stand of excellent arms, cloathing for seven thousand recruits, intended to be enlisted in the country, with tents, and other military stores, to a very considerable amount.

The capture of an entire army is one of those splendid athievements which always makes on the human mind a much stronger impression than the deduction of the same number of men from a larger army, the remnant of which is still preserved.

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The joy which this event produced in America was extreme. The contest was believed to be substantially decided. Though the war might be kept up longer, no further doubt was entertained of the success with which their struggles would be ultimately crowned. Nor was it among the smallest advantages expected from it, that it would probably decide the uncertain and balancing politics of foreign courts, anxious to separate America from Britain, but apprehensive of the hazards to be encountered by taking open part in the war.

The thanks of Congress were voted to General Gates and his army, and a medal of gold, in commemoration of this great event, was ordered to be struck, to be presented to him by the president, in the name of the United States. Colonel Wilkinson, who served as adjutant-general in the northern department, and who was very strongly recommended to Congress, was appointed brigadier-general by brevet.

In the opinion that the enemy would not immediately abandon the passes in the highlands, the recovery of which was extremely desirable, it was voted in Congress, that Putnam should join General Washington with a reinforcement not to exceed two thousand five hundred men, and that Gates should take command of the army on the Hudson, with unlimited powers to call for aids of militia

militia from the New England states, as well as from New York and New Jersey, for the different objects to be recommended to him by Congress.

A proposition to authorize the commander in chief, after consulting with Gates and Governor Clinton, to increase the detachment designed to strengthen his army, if he should then be of opinion that it might be done without endangering the objects to be accomplished by Gates, was very seriously opposed. An attempt was made to amend this proposition, by making the increase of the reinforcement depend on the approbation of Gates and Clinton; but this amendment was lost by a considerable majority, and the original resolution carried. These resolutions were not attended with any other consequence than exciting some degree of attention. The passes in the highlands were already in possession of the Americans, and a reinforcement of about five thousand continental troops had already been ordered to join the army in Pennsylvania.

The loss of the army commanded by Burgoyne entirely disabled the enemy from retaining the posts of Ticonderoga and mount Independence. After burning and otherwise destroying the buildings and works, and throwing the heavy stores into the lake, the garrison retired precipitately to Isle aux Noix, and St. John's.

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The effect produced by this event on the British cabinet and nation may be readily conceived. It seemed to remove every delusive hope of conquest, with which they had so long been flattered, and suddenly to display in open view the mass of resistance which must yet be encountered. Previous to the reception of the intelligence communicating the unfavourable issue of the expedition, the employment of savages in the war was very severely animadverted upon. Parliament assembled on the twentieth of November, and, as usual, addresses were proposed in answer to the speech from the throne, entirely approving the conduct of administration. In the house of lords, the earl of Chatham moved to amend the address, by introducing a clause recommending to his majesty an immediate cessation of hostilities, and the commencement of a treaty of conciliation, "to restore," he said, "peace and liberty to America, strength and happiness to England, security and permanent prosperity to both countries." In the course of the animated observations made by this extraordinary man in support of his motion, he said,* "But, my lords, who is the man that, in addition to the disgraces and mischiefs of war, has

* Belsham's Life of Chatham.

dared

dared to authorize and associate to our arms the tomahawk and scalping-knife of the savage?—to call into civilized alliance the wild and inhuman inhabitant of the woods?—to delegate to the merciless Indian the defence of disputed rights, and to wage the horrors of his barbarous war against our brethren? My lords, these enormities cry aloud for redress and punishment: unless thoroughly done away, it will be a stain on the national character. It is not the least of our national misfortunes that the strength and character of our army are thus impaired. Familiarized to the horrid scenes of savage cruelty, it can no longer boast of the noble and generous principles which dignify a soldier, no longer sympathize with the dignity of the royal banner, nor feel the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war, that make ambition virtue. What makes ambition virtue? The sense of honour. But is the sense of honour consistent with the spirit of plunder, or the practice of murder? Can it flow from mercenary motives, or can it prompt to cruel deeds?"*

* Lord Suffolk, secretary of state, contended for the employment of Indians in the war. "Besides its policy and necessity," his lordship said "that the measure was also allowable on principle, for that it was perfectly justifiable to use all the means that God and nature had put into our hands."

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The conduct of administration, however, received the full approbation of very large majori-

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This moving the indignation of Lord Chatham, he suddenly rose, and gave full vent to his feelings in one of the most extraordinary bursts of eloquence that the pen of history has recorded. "I am astonished," exclaimed his lordship, "shocked to hear such principles confessed; to hear them avowed in this house, or even in this country. My lords, I did not intend to have encroached again on your attention, but I cannot repress my indignation—I feel myself impelled to speak. My lords, we are called upon as members of this house, as men, as christians, to protest against such horrible barbarity—'that God and nature had put into our hands!'—What ideas of God and nature that noble lord may entertain, I know not; but I know, that such detestable principles are equally abhorrent to religion and humanity. What! to attribute the sacred sanction of God and nature to the massacres of the Indian scalping-knife!—to the cannibal savage torturing, murdering, devouring, drinking the blood of his mangled victims! Such notions shock every precept of morality, every feeling of humanity, every sentiment of honour. These abominable principles, and this more abominable avowal of them, demand the most decisive indignation. I call upon that right reverend, and this most learned bench, to vindicate the religion of their God, to support the justice of their country. I call upon the bishops to interpose the unsullied sanctity of their lawn—upon the judges, to interpose the purity of their ermine to save us from this pollution. I call upon the honour of your lordships, to reverence the dignity of your ancestors, and to maintain your own. I call upon the spirit and humanity of my country, to vindicate the national

tics: but the triumph these victories in parliament afforded was of short duration. The disastrous issue of the expedition, from the success of which

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national character. I invoke the genius of the constitution. From the tapestry that adorns these walls, the immortal ancestor of this noble lord frowns with indignation at the disgrace of his country. In vain did he defend the liberty and establish the religion of Britain against the tyranny of Rome, if these worse than popish cruelties and inquisitorial practices are endured among us. To send forth the merciless cannibal thirsting for blood!—against whom?—your protestant brethren—to lay waste their country, to desolate their dwellings, and extirpate their race and name, by the aid and instrumentality of these horrible hell-hounds of war! Spain can no longer boast pre-eminence of barbarity. She armed herself with blood-hounds to extirpate the wretched natives of Mexico: but we, more ruthless, loose these dogs of war against our countrymen in America, endeared to us by every tie that should sanctify humanity. My lords, I solemnly call upon your lordships, and upon every order of men in the state, to stamp upon this infamous procedure the indelible stigma of the public abhorrence. More particularly I call upon the holy prelates of our religion to do away this iniquity; let them perform a lustration to purify their country from this deep and deadly sin. My lords, I am old and weak, and at present unable to say more; but my feelings and indignation were too strong to have said less. I could not have slept this night in my bed, nor reposed my head upon my pillow, without giving this vent to my eternal abhorrence of such enormous and detestable principles."

Oldham's Life of Chatham.

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the most sanguine expectations had been formed, was soon known, and the mortification it produced was extreme. A reluctant confession of the calamity was made in parliament, and a desire to restore peace on any terms short of the dismemberment of the empire, found its way into the cabinet.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER VI.

Red bank evacuated—General Howe marches out of Philadelphia; skirmishes with the American Army;—returns to the City—General Washington goes into Winter Quarters at Valley-forge—Distress of the American Army at Valley-forge for Provisions—Defects in the Commissary's Department—Representations of General Washington to Congress on this Subject—The Army subsisted in a great measure by Impressments—Combination formed in Congress against General Washington—General Gates supposed to be concerned in it—Correspondence on this Subject between the two Generals—Distress of the American Army for Clothes—General Washington's Exertions to increase his Force, and to place it on a respectable Footing before the ensuing Campaign—Congress send a Committee of their own Body to the Army—Attempt to surprise Captain Lee's Corps, and the gallant Resistance made by him—Congress determine upon a second Expedition against Canada—Before its Execution, it is abandoned—General Conway resigns—Duel between him and General Cadwallader.

SO soon as the battle of the nineteenth of September had been fought, and the superiority of Gates over the enemy ascertained, a superiority

which it was not doubted would every day increase, General Washington supposed that Burgoyne would most probably return to Ticonderoga, and that the situation of the northern army would enable General Gates to spare him Morgan's rifle corps—a corps which the then moving situation of the enemy in Pennsylvania would have rendered of peculiar importance to him. As this request was not in the peremptory style of an order, but a compliance with it, notwithstanding the hard pressure of superior numbers on the army opposed to Sir William Howe, was submitted to the discretion of Gates, he chose to retain the regiment. "Since the action of the nineteenth ultimo," says his letter to the commander in chief, dated the fifth of October, "the enemy have kept the ground they occupied the morning of that day, and fortified their camp. The advanced centries of my piquets are posted within shot, and opposite those of the enemy. Neither side has given ground an inch. In this situation your excellency would not wish me to part with the corps the army of General Burgoyne is most afraid of." Two days afterwards was fought their last battle, in which this corps, as in that of the nineteenth, rendered important services.

On the first certain intelligence of the surrender of Burgoyne, Colonel Hamilton was dispatched to lay before General Gates the critical situation

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of the army in Pennsylvania, and the great importance of reinforcing it as speedily as possible. His exertions were also relied upon to expedite to the utmost the march of the troops, and to remove every obstacle which might impede their progress. On reaching General Putnam, he found that a considerable part of the northern army had joined that officer, but that Gates had retained four brigades at Albany, which were to remain there till winter, when he contemplated an expedition against Ticonderoga and mount Independence, which had not then been evacuated.

Having made such arrangements with Putnam as he supposed would secure the immediate march of a large body of continental troops from that station, Colonel Hamilton proceeded to Albany to remonstrate to General Gates against retaining so large and valuable a portion of the army at a time when so much danger threatened the very vitals of the country. He found Gates by no means disposed to part with his troops. That general could not believe it to be certain, that a reinforcement from New York was about to join Sir William Howe, and insisted that, if the troops embarked at that place, instead of proceeding to the Delaware, should make a sudden movement up the Hudson, it would be completely in their power, should that post be left defenceless, to destroy the valuable arsenal at Albany, where the military

stores captured with Burgoyne were chiefly deposited.

Having at length obtained orders to move two brigades, Colonel Hamilton forebore to press him further for the present; but in a short time he renewed his application; and Gates very reluctantly ordered Glover's brigade, one of those he had proposed retaining, to proceed to the Delaware.

While Hamilton was employed in obtaining from General Gates an order for the march of the troops from Albany, very unexpected delays took place in moving those who had joined Putnam, and had been directed some time before to reinforce with the utmost possible dispatch the army in Pennsylvania. The detachment from New York seems to have suggested to Putman the possibility of taking that place, and he does not appear to have made very great exertions to divest himself of the force necessary for an object, the accomplishment of which would have given so much *éclat* to his military character. In addition to this circumstance, an opinion had prevailed among the soldiers that their share of service for the campaign had been performed, and that it was time for them to go into winter quarters. Great discontents too prevailed about their pay, which the government had very negligently permitted to be more than half a year in arrear, and

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in Poor's brigade a mutiny broke out, in which a soldier, who was run through the body by his captain, before he expired shot the officer dead who gave the wound. Colonel Hamilton came up in time to borrow money from the governor of New York to put the troops in motion, and they proceeded by brigades to the Delaware. These several delays suspended the arrival of the reinforcements longer than was expected. Those sent from New York to General Howe were received rather earlier, and the expedition against Red bank was on that account accomplished, and the place unavoidably evacuated, before General Greene was in sufficient force to relieve it.

While Lord Cornwallis was in Jersey, and General Greene on the Delaware above him, an attack of Philadelphia was very strongly pressed by several officers high in rank, and was in some measure urged by that torrent of public opinion, which, if not opposed by a very firm mind, overwhelms the judgment, and, by controlling measures not well comprehended, may frequently produce, especially in military transactions, the most ruinous disasters.

It was stated to the commander in chief, that his army was now in greater force than he could expect it to be at any future time; that being now joined by the troops who had conquered Burgoyne, his own reputation, the reputation of the

army, the opinion of Congress, and the public expectation, required some decisive blow on his part. That the rapid depreciation of the paper currency, by which the resources for carrying on the war were dried up, rendered indispensable some grand effort to bring it to a speedy termination.

The plan of attack proposed was, that General Greene should embark two thousand men at Dunk's ferry, and fall down the river in the night, so as to land in the town just before day, attack the enemy in the rear, and take possession of the bridge over the Schuylkill. That a strong detachment should march down on the west side of that river, and occupy the heights which enfiladed the works of the enemy; from whence a brisk cannonade should be carried on, while a part of the same force should march down to the bridge, and attack in front at the same instant that the assault on the rear should commence from the party which had moved down the Delaware. That the residue of the continental army, in three columns, should attack the whole line of redoubts in front.

Not only the commander in chief, but the best officers of his army, those who would not be impelled by the clamours of the ill-informed to ruin the public interests, were decisively opposed to this mad enterprise.

The two armies, they said, were now nearly equal in point of numbers, and the detachment into

into Jersey could not be supposed to have so weakened Sir William Howe, as to compensate for the advantage he would derive from his position. That his right was covered by the Delaware, his left by the Schuylkill; his rear by the junction of those two rivers, as well as by the city of Philadelphia, and his front by a line of fourteen redoubts, extending from river to river, and connected by abattis and circular works. These redoubts were well defended by musketry and artillery. It would be indispensably necessary to carry them all; since, to leave a part of them to play on the rear of the columns while engaged in front with the enemy, in Philadelphia, would be extremely hazardous.

Supposing the redoubts carried, and the British army driven into the town, yet all military men agreed that nothing could be more hazardous than an attempt to storm a town. The streets would be defended by an artillery greatly superior to that of the Americans, which would attack them in front, while the brick houses would be lined with musketry, whose fire must thin the ranks of the assailants.

A part of the plan, the happy execution of which would be essential to success, was, that the enemy should be surprized in the rear by the corps which was to fall down the Delaware. This would require too many favourable concurring circum-

stances to be calculated on with any confidence. As the position of General Greene was well known, it could not be supposed that Sir William Howe would be entirely inattentive to him. It was probable that even his embarkation might not be made unnoticed; but it was presuming a degree of negligence which ought not to be assumed, to suppose that he could pass down the Delaware to Philadelphia undiscovered. So soon as he should be observed, it would not be difficult to comprehend the whole plan, and to prepare for it. It would never be conjectured that General Greene was to attack singly, and, of consequence, it would be understood that a correspondent attack would be made on the lines in front.

If the attack in front should fail, which could not be thought even improbable, the total loss of the two thousand men thrown into the rear must follow, and General Howe would consequently maintain his superiority through the winter.

The situation of America did not require these desperate measures. In the course of the campaign no considerable impression had been made. With great superiority of numbers, the British troops had indeed acquired the possession of some of the principal sea-port towns, but they were enclosed in them, and could not obtain the command of the country without risking a battle on equal terms, unless the army should destroy itself

itself by some such enterprise. That their general would be compelled to risk such a battle, or to manifest his consciousness of inferiority to the American army. That the depreciation of paper money was the inevitable consequence of the immense emissions which had been made without corresponding taxes, and that it was by removing the cause, not by sacrificing the army, the depreciation was to be stopped. The corruption and defection of the people, their unwillingness to serve in the army of the United States, was an evil which would be very greatly increased by an unsuccessful attempt on Philadelphia. The mischief was admitted and lamented, but it only increased the necessity of preserving the present military force, and not exposing it to useless hazards, by attempts from which only loss could be reasonably counted on, and which only a state of despair could justify.

Washington possessed too much discernment to be dazzled by the false brilliant presented by those who urged the necessity of storming Philadelphia, in order to throw a lustre around his own fame and that of his army; and too much firmness of temper, too much virtue and patriotism, to be diverted from a purpose known to be right, by the clamours of the factious, or the discontents of the ignorant. Disregarding the importunities of mistaken friends, the insinuations

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of enemies, and the expectations of the ill-informed, he persevered in his resolution to make no attempt on Philadelphia. He thereby saved his army, and was able to keep the field in the very face of the enemy; while the clamour of the moment wasted in air.

The determination against attacking Philadelphia being taken, General Greene was directed to fight Lord Cornwallis in Jersey, if a fair occasion of doing so to advantage should present itself. But it has been already stated that, before he had been joined by the last brigade from the northern army, his lordship had taken an unassailable position at Gloster, from whence he was passing over the supplies he had collected to Philadelphia. In the belief that he would soon follow them with his detachment, and that General Howe, with his whole collected force, would avail himself of the division of the American army to attack their camp, Greene was directed immediately to repass the Delaware, and to join General Washington.

The opinion of the intention of Sir William Howe to make some attempt on the American camp, was not ill-founded. Scarcely had Lord Cornwallis returned to Philadelphia, and Greene rejoined the American army, when unquestionable intelligence was received of the preparations of the enemy to march out with all their strength, and with the avowed object of forcing Washington

ington from his present position, and driving him beyond the mountains.

To prepare for the conflict believed to be approaching, orders were given that all the heavy baggage of the army should be in a condition to be removed at a moment's warning; and the soldiers were exhorted, by every motive of emulation and of patriotism, not to disappoint the high expectations formed of them by their country.

On the night of the 4th of December, Sir William Howe marched out of Philadelphia with his whole force, and encamped on Chesnut-hill, in front of the right of the American army, and distant from it about three miles. A slight skirmish ensued between the Pennsylvania militia under General Irvin, and the advanced light parties of the enemy, in which the general was wounded and taken, and the militia, with very little other loss, were dispersed.

The range of hills on which the British were posted, approached nearer to those occupied by the Americans as they proceeded northwardly.

Having continued the whole day reconnoitring the right, the enemy, in the course of the night, changed their ground, and moving to their right along the hills, took a very advantageous position, within about one mile of the front of the American left. The next day, December the 7th, they inclined still further to the left, and, in doing so, approached

approached still nearer that wing of the army. A general engagement was now believed certain, and General Gist with some Maryland militia, and Colonel Morgan with his rifle corps, were ordered to attack their flanking and advanced parties. A sharp action ensued, in which Major Morris of Jersey, a very brave officer in Morgan's regiment, was mortally wounded, and twenty-seven of his men were killed and wounded. A small loss was also sustained in the militia. The parties first attacked were driven in, but the enemy reinforcing in numbers, and General Washington being unwilling to move from the heights in order to come to an engagement on the ground which was the scene of the skirmish, declined reinforcing Gist and Morgan, who, in their turn, were compelled to give way.

The enemy continued manœuvring towards the flank, and in front of the left wing, the position of which Washington in some degree changed, so as to prepare to receive their whole force in that quarter, on which an attack was every instant expected, and to bring his right to its support. The day was spent in these manœuvres; in the course of which, Washington rode through every brigade of his army, delivering, in person, his orders respecting the manner of receiving the enemy, exhorting his troops to rely principally on the bayonet, and encouraging them,

them, by the steady firmness of his countenance, as well as by his words, to a vigorous performance of their duty. The dispositions of the evening indicated an intention to attack him the ensuing morning; but, in the afternoon of the next day, December the 8th, the enemy suddenly filed off from their right, which had extended beyond the American left, and retreated to Philadelphia. Light parties were detached to harass their rear, but could not overtake it.

The loss of the enemy in this expedition, as stated in the official letter of General Howe, rather exceeded one hundred in killed, wounded, and missing; and was principally sustained in the skirmish of the seventh, in which Major Morris fell.

On no former occasion had the two armies met, uncovered by works, with the superiority in point of numbers in favour of the Americans. The effective force of the enemy was stated at twelve thousand men. It has been since declared by an officer,* who then belonged to it, but who appears to have imbibed strong prejudices against Sir William Howe, to have amounted to fourteen thousand. The American army consisted of precisely twelve thousand one hundred and sixty-one continental troops, and three thousand two

* Stedman.

hundred

hundred and forty-one militia. This equality in point of numbers between the continental troops and the enemy, rendered it a prudent precaution to retain the superiority of position which had been acquired. The two armies having occupied hills fronting each other, neither could attack without giving to its adversary, in some degree, the advantage in point of ground; and that was an advantage which neither seemed willing to part with.

The return of Sir William Howe to Philadelphia without bringing on the action which was so entirely in his power, after marching out with the avowed intention of fighting, is the best testimony of the respect he felt for the talents of his adversary, and the courage of the troops he was to contend with.

His movements were all calculated to preserve in the mind of Washington, the conviction that he should be able to fight on his own ground, and it was not easy to believe that Howe would exhibit to America the spectacle of withdrawing his whole force from the face of his enemy into Philadelphia, without a general engagement, while his opponents kept the field. This movement was certainly calculated to support the opinion, that he felt no certain confidence of victory over the continental army, equally numerous with his own.

On

On the first intelligence that the enemy was in motion, the tents and heavy baggage had been removed, so as to leave the army entirely unincumbered, and expose nothing to loss, if the event should be unfortunate, which was not necessarily put into hazard.

The season was now becoming extremely severe, and it was impossible, with an army not half clothed, and with a very inadequate supply of blankets, any longer to keep the field in tents. It was absolutely necessary to place them in winter quarters; but, in the existing state of things, the choice of winter quarters was a subject for serious reflection. It was impossible to canton them in villages, without, in a great degree, uncovering the country, or being exposed to the hazards of being beaten in detachment.

To avoid risking the one or the other of these calamities, it was determined to take a strong position in the neighbourhood of the enemy, equally distant from the Delaware above and below Philadelphia; and there to erect huts, in the form of a regular encampment, which might cover the army during the winter. A very strong and commanding piece of ground at Valley-forge, on the west side of Schuylkill, between twenty and thirty miles from Philadelphia, was selected for that purpose; and some time before day, on the morning of the 11th of December, the

the army commenced its march to take possession of it. By an accidental concurrence of circumstances, Lord Cornwallis, at the head of a very strong corps, had been detached that morning on the west side of the Schuylkill, on a foraging party. Having fallen in with a brigade of Pennsylvania militia under General Potter, which was posted there in order to cover that country from small plundering parties, and to intercept the people who might be going to market, he soon dispersed it. Pursuing the fugitives, he had gained the heights opposite Madison's ford, over which a bridge had been thrown for the purpose of crossing the river, and had posted troops so as to command the defile called the Gulph, and the road from the ford, just as the front division of the American army had gained the western bank of the river. This movement, which was entirely unexpected, had been made without any knowledge of the intention of General Washington to change his position, or any design of contesting with him the passage of the Schuylkill; but the troops had been posted in the manner already mentioned, merely to cover a party at that time foraging in the country.

The first intelligence induced an opinion that the whole British army was out; and as it would have been extremely dangerous to attempt crossing the bridge in their face, the troops already on the

the west side were called back, and the army moved rather higher up the river, for the purpose of understanding the real situation, force, and designs of the enemy. On the 12th, Lord Cornwallis returned to Philadelphia, and General Washington crossed the Schuylkill in the course of the night.

Here the commander in chief, for the first time, communicated to his army, in general orders, the manner in which he designed to dispose of them during the winter. He expressed the strongest approbation of their past conduct, presented them with an encouraging state of the future prospects of their country, exhorted them to bear with continuing fortitude the hardships inseparable from the position they were about to take, and endeavoured to convince their judgments that those hardships were not imposed on them by unfeeling caprice, but were necessary for the public good.

The winter had for some time set in with great severity, and the sufferings of the army were extreme. In a very few days, however, their sufferings were considerably diminished, by the erection of huts made of logs and filled in with mortar, which, after being dried with fires, formed comfortable habitations, and gave content to men long unused to the conveniencies of life. The order of a regular encampment was observed, and no-

thing evidenced the army to be in winter quarters, but the substitution of huts for tents.

The same care to cut off all communication between the enemy and the country was manifested, and the same means employed to effect that object, which had been used in the most active part of the campaign. One division, commanded by General Smallwood, was detached to Wilmington, and directed, with the aid of the militia, to guard that part of the Delaware; Colonel Morgan was placed on the lines, on the west side of the Schuylkill, to prevent the people of the country from carrying provisions to the market in Philadelphia; and General Armstrong, with the Pennsylvania militia, was stationed near the old camp of White marsh, for the same object. To assist in these duties, Major Jamieson, with two troops of cavalry, was directed to guard the east, and Captain Lee, with his troop, the west side of the river. General Count Pulaski, a Polish nobleman, who had been appointed to command the horse, repaired, with the residue of the brigade of cavalry, to Trenton, where his duty was to instruct and fit them for the next campaign. The vast importance of cavalry to an army became every day more visible, and the commander in chief determined to make great efforts to render that part of his force more efficient.

While these dispositions were made to render

Philadelphia

Philadelphia an inconvenient station to the enemy, the main army was so situated as to receive regular and prompt intelligence of any movements which might be made in force, and a bridge was thrown over the Schuylkill to facilitate its operations on the east side of that river.

The islands above the mouth of Derby creek produce an immense quantity of hay, great part of which still remained on them. While the army lay on the east side of the Schuylkill, this forage seems to have been considered by the enemy as entirely secure. To destroy it, since it was impossible to remove it to a place of safety, and thereby compel the enemy to forage at a distance in the country, was the first object with General Washington after crossing the river; and on the 21st of December, while the troops were yet hutting, he directed General Potter, then on the west side of the Schuylkill, and Colonel Morgan, to effect it. Very early in the morning of the 22d, after these orders had been given, Sir William Howe marched out in full force, and encamped between Derby and the middle ferry, so as completely to cover the islands, while a foraging party took possession of the hay and removed it.

It was intended to disturb this operation, and orders were given to put the army in motion for that purpose, when the alarming fact was disclosed, that the commissary's stores were entirely ex-

hausted, and that the last ration had been delivered and consumed.

Accustomed as were the continental troops to privations of every sort, this was not a time to move them against the enemy. In a desert which supplies not the means of subsistence, or in a garrison where food is unattainable, courage, patriotism, and habits of discipline, enable the soldier, in a degree which astonishes the world, to conquer wants which would be deemed invincible. But to perish in a country abounding with provisions requires something more than fortitude; nor can soldiers readily comprehend any combination of causes, unless there be some sudden and apparent accident, which in such a situation may withhold from them their usual supplies. It is not therefore surprising, that, among a few of the troops, some indications of a mutiny appeared. It is perhaps much more astonishing, that the great body of the army bore, without a murmur, this stoppage of their food, to them so unaccountable.

On receiving intelligence of the fact, General Washington immediately ordered the country to be scoured, and provisions to be seized wherever found, to supply the pressing wants of the moment. In the mean time, only light parties could be detached to harass the enemy about Derby, where Sir William Howe, with his accustomed circumspection, kept his army so compact, and his

his troops so within the lines, that an opportunity was very seldom afforded, even to the vigilance of Morgan and Lee, in any degree to annoy him; and after completing his forage he returned, with very inconsiderable loss, into Philadelphia.

That the American army, while the value still retained by paper money placed ample funds in the hands of government, should, in the midst of a state so abounding with provisions as Pennsylvania, be disabled by the absolute want of food from performing any of its duties, is one of those extraordinary facts which cannot fail to excite some degree of attention.

Very early in the war, the office of commissary-general had been conferred on Colonel Trumbull, of Connecticut, a gentleman whose talents, activity, and zeal, fitted him well for that important station: yet, from the difficulty perhaps of arranging in its commencement, without the advantages of experience, so complicated a department, complaints were repeatedly made of the insufficiency of the supplies. It was often alleged, that the army was on the point of suffering for provisions, that its movements were embarrassed by that cause, and it was, in particular, believed, that to the want of salt meat, of vinegar, and of vegetables, was in a very great degree to be attributed that uncommon mortality which, much more

than the sword of the enemy, had thinned its ranks.

The subject was taken up by Congress, but unfortunately the remedy they administered, from the time of its application, as well as from the ingredients of which it was composed, served only to increase the disease.

They indeed directed vegetables and vinegar to be purchased, but their system was not completed till near midsummer, and then its arrangements were such, that Colonel Trumbull refused to accept the office assigned to him, and new men to to be called into service, at a time when the strongest necessity existed for retaining in the department those who understood, in all its modifications, the plan of supplies for the campaign. The principle adopted in the new arrangement, which expelled Colonel Trumbull from the service, if an error, is one which an assembly, without that practical knowledge which is drawn from experience, will ever be much inclined to commit. It was a creation, in some of the subordinate officers, of an independence on the head of the department, and an immediate and direct dependence on Congress. In addition to the commissary-general of purchases, and a commissary-general of issues, each to be appointed by Congress, the new plan contemplated four deputies in each department,

department, who were also to be appointed by the same body, and were not removable by the head of the department, but might be suspended and accused before Congress, who should then examine the charge, and either remove the accused individual from his office, or restore him to it.

This *imperium in imperio*, erected in direct opposition to the opinion of the commander in chief, effectually drove Colonel Trumbull from the army. In his letter to Congress, dated the 19th of July, 1777, stating his reasons for declining the commission of commissary-general of purchases, which was offered him, he says, "In my humble opinion the head of every department ought to have the control of it. In this establishment, an *imperium in imperio* is created. If I consent to act, I must be at continual variance with the whole department, and of course be in continual hot water. I must turn accuser, and be continually applying to Congress, and attending with witnesses, to support my charges; or I must sit down in ease and quiet, let the deputies do as they like, and enjoy a sinecure. The first situation I cannot think of, the last I never will accept. It never shall be said, I was the first American pensioner. I am willing to do and to suffer for my country and its cause, but I cannot sacrifice my honour and my principles. I can by no means consent to act under a regulation, which,

in my opinion, will never answer the purpose intended by Congress, nor supply the army as it should be.

" I must beg Congress to appoint some person in my place as soon as may be; till then, I will continue to furnish the army as heretofore."

Congress persisted in their system, and the effects of deranging, in the midst of a campaign, so important a department as that must be which feeds the troops were not long in unfolding themselves.

In every military division of the continent, loud complaints were made of the deficiency of the the supplies. The success of Gates appears to have been more endanged by this cause, than by the movement of Sir Henry Clinton up the Hudson. The army under General Washington was often greatly embarrassed, and his movements not unfrequently suspended by the want of provisions. The present absolute failure of all supplies was preceded, for a few days, by the issuing of meat absolutely unfit to be eaten. Representations on this subject were made to the commander in chief, who, on the morning that the enemy actually moved out to Derby, and before intelligence of that movement had been received, communicated the representations to Congress.

" It is," said he, " with infinite pain and concern, that I transmit Congress the enclosed copies of

of sundry letters respecting the state of the commissary's department. In these, matters are not exaggerated. I do not know from what cause this alarming deficiency, or rather total failure of supplies arises; but unless more vigorous exertions, and better regulations take place in that line, and immediately, this army must dissolve. I have done all in my power by remonstrating, by writing to, by ordering the commissaries on this head, from time to time, but without any good effect, or obtaining more than a present scanty relief. Owing to this, the march of the army has been delayed, on more than one interesting occasion, in the course of the present campaign; and had a body of the enemy crossed the Schuylkill this morning, as I had reason to expect from the intelligence I received at four o'clock last night, the divisions which I ordered to be in readiness to march and meet them would not have moved."

Congress had, by a resolution of the 17th of September, which was continued in November, authorized the commander in chief to seize provisions necessary for the use of his army, within seventy miles of head quarters, and either to pay for them in money, or in certificates, for the redemption of which, the faith of the United States was pledged. This service was commonly performed by the staff of the army, who seldom diminished the odium of the measure, by the manner

ner in which it was executed. A circumstance which contributed to render it still more obnoxious was, that the supplies of money were seldom sufficient to take up these certificates when presented; and the farmer, whose property had been seized, often found himself compelled, after a long attendance, to return without receiving payment for it. General Washington's remonstrances on this subject had never been sufficiently attended to, and the supplies of money continued to be irregular.

In the mean time, the provisions carried into Philadelphia were paid for in specie at a good price. The inhabitants of that part of Pennsylvania were by no means unanimous or zealous in support of the war; and the difference between a prompt payment in gold and silver, and a certificate, of which the value was often diminished by depreciation, before the money could be received on it, was too great not to influence, very considerably, their wishes and their conduct. Their patriotism could not resist the temptation; and notwithstanding the dangers to which they were exposed by the rigorous laws enacted against the practice, and the vigilance used by the troops stationed on the lines, their utmost dexterity was employed in concealing their provisions from those who were to impress for the army, and in conveying them privately into Philadelphia.

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The seizures made produced great irritation and disgust, and rendered the cause still more unpopular with those who were not predisposed to make the greatest sacrifices for its support. General Washington was under very considerable apprehensions of the ill effects which might be produced by this violent proceeding, and exercised with some caution the powers confided to him. He was not disposed to strip the inhabitants of what was necessary for the support of their families, and was at all times more inclined to obtain provisions by fair contract than by force. He felt some difficulty too in employing the military in compelling the people to give up their property, and was much disposed to procure the intervention of the civil authority. Notwithstanding the reluctance with which he exercised the powers confided to him, he did exercise them, and by these means considerable supplies were acquired; but Congress appeared as much dissatisfied with the supposed lenity, as the people were with the rigour of the commander in chief, in consequence of which, as the demand greatly exceeded the supply, the subject was taken up, the forbearance of the general disapproved of, and at the same time instructions were given for the rigorous exertion in future of his powers to seize. In reply to the letter communicating these resolves, the general stated the conduct he had observed, insisted that provisions had

had been taken very extensively, and at the same time repeated his opinion, that such measures would be much more readily submitted to, if executed by the civil authority, than when they appeared to flow entirely from the military.

In obedience, however, to the will of Congress, he issued a proclamation, calling on the farmers within seventy miles of head quarters, to thresh out one half of their grain by the first of February, and the residue by the first of March, under the penalty of having the whole seized as straw.

The success of this experiment for subsisting the army entirely by impressments, did not correspond with the wishes of Congress. Independent of the uncertainty attending supplies extracted daily by force from an unwilling people for the use of the moment, the procedure was attended with the pernicious and dangerous consequences which had been foreseen by the general, and to avoid which he had considered this system as a dernier resort, of which he was only to avail himself, where the danger that the property would fall into the hands of the enemy was apparent, or the necessity so urgent as to render it indispensable. In answer to a letter from the board of war, stating that Congress would take measures for correcting the abuses in the commissary's department, but that for the present, it was absolutely necessary to continue to support the army by force, he said, "I shall use

use every exertion that may be expedient and practicable for subsisting the army and keeping it together; but I must observe that this never can be done by coercive means. Supplies of provisions and clothing must be had in another way, or it cannot exist. The small seizures that were made of the former, some days ago, in consequence of the most pressing and urgent necessity, when the alternative was to do that or dissolve—excited the greatest alarm and uneasiness imaginable, even among some of our best and warmest friends. Such procedures may relieve for an instant, but, eventually, will prove of the most pernicious consequence. Besides spreading disaffection and jealousy among the people, they never fail, even in the most veteran armies, under the most rigid and exact discipline, to raise in the soldiery a disposition to licentiousness, plunder, and robbery, which it has ever been found exceedingly difficult to suppress; and which has not only proved ruinous to the inhabitants, but, in many instances, to the armies themselves." To Congress, to whom a similar letter was addressed, he added, "I regret the occasion which compelled us to the measure the other day, and shall consider it as among the greatest of our misfortunes to be under the necessity of practising it again. I am now obliged to keep several parties from the army

army threshing grain, that our supplies may not fail; but this will not do."

About this time a strong combination was forming against the commander in chief, in which several members of Congress, and a very few officers of the army, are believed to have entered.

The splendor with which the capitulation at Saratoga had surrounded the military reputation of General Gates, acquired some advocates for the opinion, that the arms of America would be more fortunate, if that gentleman should be elevated to the supreme command. He could not be supposed to be himself hostile to the prevalence of such an opinion, and some parts of his conduct were sufficient to shew that, if it did not originate with him, he was not among the last to adopt it. He had not only omitted to communicate to General Washington the success of his army, after the victory of the 7th of October had opened to him the prospect of finally destroying the enemy opposed to him; but he carried on a correspondence with General Conway, in which that officer had expressed himself with great contempt of the commander in chief; and on the disclosure of this circumstance, General Gates had demanded the name of the informer, in a letter expressed in terms by no means conciliatory, and which was accompanied

accompanied by the very extraordinary circumstance of being passed through Congress.*

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* The following are the letters which passed between the two generals on this subject.

SIR, *Albany, December 8th*, 1777.

I SHALL not attempt to describe what, as a private gentleman, I cannot help feeling, on representing to my mind, the disagreeable situation which confidential letters, when exposed to public inspection, may place an unsuspecting correspondent in; but, as a public officer, I conjure your excellency, to give me all the assistance you can, in tracing out the author of the infidelity, which put extracts from General Conway's letters to me into your hands. Those letters have been stealingly copied, but, which of them, when, or by whom, is to me, as yet, an unfathomable secret.

There is not one officer in my suit, nor amongst those who have a free access to me, upon whom I could, with the least justification to myself, fix the suspicion; and yet, my uneasiness may deprive me of the usefulness of the worthiest men. It is, I believe, in your excellency's power to do me, and the United States a very important service, by detecting a wretch, who may betray me, and capitally injure the very operations under your immediate direction. For this reason, sir, I beg your excellency will favour me with the proofs you can procure to that effect. But the crime being eventually so important, that the least loss of time may be attended with the worst consequences; and, it being unknown to me, whether the letter came to you from a member of Congress, or from an officer, I shall have the honour of transmitting a copy of this to the president, that Congress may, in concert with your excellency, obtain, as soon as possible, a discovery, which so deeply

The state of Pennsylvania too, chagrined at losing its capital, and forgetful of its own back-

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deeply affects the safety of the States. Crimes of that magnitude ought not to remain unpunished.

I have the honour to be, sir,
with the greatest respect,
your excellency's most
humble, and most obedient servant,
HORATIO GATES.

His Excellency General Washington.

SIR, *Valley-forge, January 4th*, 1778.

YOUR letter of the 8th ult. came to my hands a few days ago, and to my great surprise informed me, that a copy of it had been sent to Congress, for what reason, I find myself unable to account; but as some end doubtless was intended to be answered by it, I am laid under the disagreeable necessity of returning my answer through the same channel, lest any member of that honourable body should harbour an unfavourable suspicion of my having practised some indirect means to come at the contents of the confidential letters between you and General Conway.

I am to inform you, that ——— on his way to Congress, in the month of October last, fell in with Lord Stirling at Reading; and, not in confidence that I ever understood, informed his aid-de-camp, Major Macwilliams, that General Conway had written thus to you: "Heaven has been determined to save your country, or a weak general and bad counsellors * would have ruined it." Lord Stirling, from motives of friendship, transmitted the account with this remark, "The enclosed was communicated by ——— to Major Williams;

* One of whom by, the by, he was,

wardness in strengthening the army, which had twice fought superior numbers in its defence,

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liams; such wicked duplicity of conduct I shall always think it my duty to detect."

In consequence of this information, and without having any thing more in view than merely to shew that gentleman that I was not unapprised of his intriguing disposition, I wrote him a letter in these words: "Sir, a letter which I received last night, contained the following paragraph;

"In a letter from General Conway to General Gates, he says, 'Heaven has been determined to save your country; or a weak general and bad counsellors would have ruined it.' I am, sir, &c."

Neither the letter, nor the information which occasioned it, was ever, directly or indirectly, communicated by me to a single officer in this army, (out of my own family,) excepting the Marquis de la Fayette, who, having been spoken to on this subject by General Conway, applied for, and saw, under injunctions of secrecy, the letter which contained this information; so desirous was I of concealing every matter that could, in its consequences, give the smallest interruption to the tranquillity of this army, or afford a gleam of hope to the enemy by dissensions therein.

Thus, sir, with an openness and candour which I hope will ever characterise and mark my conduct, have I complied with your request. The only concern I feel upon the occasion, finding how matters stand, is, that in doing this, I have necessarily been obliged to name a gentleman who, I am persuaded, (although I never exchanged a word with him upon the subject,) thought he was rather doing an act of justice, than committing an act of infidelity; and sure I am, that, till Lord Stirling's letter came to my hands, I never knew that General Conway (whom I viewed in the light of a

furnished many discontented individuals, who supposed it to be the fault of General Washing-

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stranger to you) was a correspondent of yours, much less did I suspect that I was the subject of your confidential letters. Pardon me, then, for adding, that, so far from conceiving the safety of the States can be affected, or in the smallest degree injured, by a discovery of this kind, or that I should be called upon in such solemn terms to point out the author, that I considered the information as coming from yourself, and given with a friendly view to forewarn, and consequently forearm me, against a secret enemy, or in other words, a dangerous incendiary, in which character, sooner or later, this country will know General Conway. But in this, as in other matters of late, I have found myself mistaken.

I am, sir,

Your most obedient servant,

To Major-general Gates. G. WASHINGTON.

During the existence of this faction, an attempt appears to have been made to alienate the affections of the leading political characters in the States from the commander in chief. The following letters exhibit a very unsuccessful effort of this sort, which was made on Governor Henry, of Virginia, by a gentleman not supposed to be a member from that state.

DEAR SIR, *Williamsburgh, Feb. 20th,* 1778.

You will no doubt be surprised at seeing the enclosed letter, in which the encomiums bestowed on me are as undeserved, as the censures aimed at you are unjust. I am sorry there should be one man who counts himself my friend, who is not yours.

Perhaps I give you needless trouble in handing you this paper. The writer of it may be too insignificant to deserve any

ton that he had not, with an army inferior to that of the enemy in numbers, and in every equipment,

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any notice. If I knew this to be the case, I should not have intruded on your time, which is so precious. But there may possibly be some scheme or party forming to your prejudice. The enclosed leads to such a suspicion. Believe me, sir, I have too high a sense of the obligations America has to you, to abet or countenance so unworthy a proceeding. The most exalted merit hath ever been found to attract envy. But I please myself with the hope, that the same fortitude and greatness of mind, which have hitherto braved all the difficulties and dangers inseparable from your station, will rise superior to every attempt of the envious partisan.

I really cannot tell who is the writer of this letter, which not a little perplexes me. The hand-writing is altogether strange to me.

To give you the trouble of this, gives me pain. It would suit my inclination better to give you some assistance in the great business of the war. But I will not conceal any thing from you by which you may be affected: for I really think your personal welfare, and the happiness of America, are intimately connected. I beg you will be assured of that high regard and esteem with which I ever am,

Dear sir,

Your affectionate friend,

and very humble servant,

P. HENRY.

His Excellency General Washington,
at Head-quarters.

DEAR SIR, *York Town, Jan. 12th,* 1778.

THE common danger of our country first brought you and me together. I recollect with pleasure the influence of your conversation and eloquence upon the opinions of this country

effected the same result which had been produced in the north, by a continental army, in itself

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in the beginning of the present controversy. You first taught us to shake off our idolatrous attachment to royalty, and to oppose its incroachments upon our liberties with our very lives. By these means you saved us from ruin. The independence of America is the offspring of that liberal spirit of thinking and acting which followed the destruction of the spectres of kings, and the mighty power of Great Britain.

But, sir, we have only passed the Red Sea. A dreary wilderness is still before us; and unless a Moses or a Joshua are raised up in our behalf, we must perish before we reach the Promised Land. We have nothing to fear from our enemies on the way. General Howe, it is true, has taken Philadelphia. But he has only changed his prison. His dominions are bounded on all sides by his out centries. America can only be undone by herself. She looks up to her counsels and arms for protection; but alas! what are they? Her representation in Congress dwindled to only twenty-one members—her Adams, her Wilson, her Henry, are no more among them. Her counsels weak—and partial remedies applied constantly for universal diseases. Her army—what is it? A major-general belonging to it called it a few days ago, in my hearing, a *mob*. Discipline unknown or *wholly* neglected—the quarter-master's and commissary's departments filled with idleness, ignorance, and peculation—our hospitals crowded with six thousand sick, but half provided with necessaries or accommodations, and more dying in them in one month than perished in the field during the whole of the last campaign—the money depreciating without any effectual measures being taken to raise it—the country distracted with the Don Quixote attempt to regulate the prices of provisions; an *artificial* famine created by it, and

a *real*

much stronger than its adversary, and so reinforced by militia, as to amount to three times the

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a *real* one dreaded from it—the spirit of the people failing through a more intimate acquaintance with the causes of our misfortunes—many submitting daily to General Howe, and more wishing to do it, only to avoid the calamities which threaten our country. But, is our cause desperate?—By no means. We have wisdom, virtue, and strength enough to save us, if they could be called into action. The northern army has shewn us what Americans are capable of doing with a GENERAL at their head. The spirit of the southern army is no ways inferior to the spirit of the northern. A Gates, a Lee, or a Conway, would in a few weeks render them an irresistible body of men. The last of the above officers has accepted of the new office of inspector-general of our army, in order to reform abuses: but the remedy is only a palliative one. In one of his letters to a friend, he says, "A great and good God hath decreed America to be free, or the ——— and weak counsellors would have ruined her long ago." You may rest assured of *each* of the facts related in this letter. The author of it is one of your Philadelphia friends. A hint of his name, if found out by the handwriting, must not be mentioned to your most intimate friend. Even the letter *must* be thrown in the fire. But some of its contents ought to be made public, in order to awaken, enlighten, and alarm our country. I rely upon your prudence, and am, dear sir, with my usual attachment to *you*, and to our beloved independence,

Yours sincerely.

DEAR SIR, *Williamsburg, March 5th*, 1778.

BY an express which Colonel Finnie sent to camp, I enclosed you an anonymous letter, which I hope got safe to

number opposed to them. The legislature of that state, on the report that General Washington was

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hand. I am anxious to hear something that will serve to explain the strange affair which I am now informed is taken up respecting you. Mr. Curtis has just paid me a visit, and by him I learn sundry particulars concerning General Mifflin that much surprise me. It is very hard to trace the schemes and windings of the enemies of America. I really thought that man its friend; however, I am too far from him to judge of his present temper.

While you face the armed enemies of your liberty in the field, and, by the favour of God, have been kept unhurt, I trust your country will never harbour in her bosom the miscreant who would ruin her best supporter. I wish not to flatter; but when arts unworthy honest men are used to defame and traduce you, I think it not amiss, but a duty, to assure you of that estimation in which the public hold you. Not that I think any testimony I can bear is necessary for your support or private satisfaction, for a bare recollection of what is past must give you sufficient pleasure in every circumstance of life; but I cannot help assuring you, on this occasion, of the high sense of gratitude which all ranks of men, in this your native country, bear to you. It will give me sincere pleasure to manifest my regards, and render my best services to you or yours. I don't like to make a parade of these things, and I know you are not fond of it; however, I hope the occasion will plead my excuse.

The assembly have at length empowered the executive here to provide for the Virginia troops, serving with you, with clothes, &c. I am making provision accordingly, and hope to do something towards it. Every possible assistance from government is afforded the commissary of provisions, whose department has not been attended to: 'twas taken up

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moving into winter quarters, addressed a remonstrance to Congress on the subject, which mani-

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by me too late to do much. Indeed the load of business devolved on me is too great to be managed well. A French ship, mounting thirty guns, that has been long chased by the English cruizers, has got into Carolina, as I hear, last night. Wishing you all possible felicity, I am,

My dear sir,

Your ever affectionate friend

and very humble servant,

His Excellency General Washington, P. HENRY.

at Head-quarters.

DEAR SIR, *Valley-forge, March* 27, 1778.

ABOUT eight days past I was honoured with your favour of the 20th ultimo. Your friendship, sir, in transmitting me the anonymous letter you had received, lays me under the most grateful obligations, and, if any thing could give a still further claim to my acknowledgments, it is the very polite and delicate terms with which you have been pleased to make the communication.

I have ever been happy in supposing that I held a place in your esteem, and the proof of it you have afforded, on this occasion, makes me peculiarly so. The favourable light in which you hold me is truly flattering; but I should feel much regret if I thought the happiness of America so intimately connected with my personal welfare, as you so obligingly seem to consider it. All I can say is, that she has ever had, and I trust she ever will have, my honest exertions to promote her interest. I cannot hope that my services have been the best; but my heart tells me they have been the best that I could render.

fested in very intelligible terms their dissatisfaction with the commander in chief. About the

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That I may have erred in using the means in my power for accomplishing the objects of the arduous, exalted station with which I am honoured, I cannot doubt; nor do I wish my conduct to be exempt from the reprehension it may deserve. Error is the portion of humanity, and to censure it, whether committed by this or that public character, is the prerogative of freemen. However, being intimately acquainted with the man I believe to be the author of the letter transmitted, and having always received from him the strongest professions of attachment and regard, I am constrained to consider him as not possessing a great degree of candour and honest sincerity, though his views in addressing you should have been the result of conviction, and founded in motives of public good. This is not the only secret insidious attempt that has been made to wound my reputation. There have been others equally base, cruel, and ungenerous; because conducted with as little frankness, and proceeding from views perhaps as personally interested.

I am, dear sir, &c.

To his Excellency Patrick Henry, Esq. Governor of Virginia.

DEAR SIR, *Camp, March* 28, 1778.

JUST as I was about to close my letter of yesterday, your favour of the 5th instant came to hand.

I can only thank you again, in the language of the most undissembled gratitude, for your friendship; and assure you the indulgent disposition which Virginia in particular, and the states in general, entertain towards me, gives me the most sensible pleasure. The approbation of my country is what I wish; and, as far as my abilities and opportunity will permit,

I hope

same time a new board of war was created, of which General Gates was appointed the president; and General Mifflin, who was supposed to be also of the party unfriendly to Washington, was one of its members. General Conway, who was perhaps the only brigadier in the army that had

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I hope I shall endeavour to deserve it: it is the highest reward to a feeling mind, and happy are they who so conduct themselves as to merit it.

The anonymous letter with which you was pleased to favour me, was written by ————, so far as I can judge from a similitude of hands. This man has been elaborate and studied in his professions of regard for me, and that long since the letter to you.

My caution to avoid any thing that could injure the service, prevented me from communicating, except to a very few of my friends, the intrigues of a faction which I know was formed against me, since it might serve to publish our internal dissensions; but their own restless zeal to advance their views has too clearly betrayed them, and made concealment on my part fruitless. I cannot precisely mark the extent of their views, but it appeared in general, that General Gates was to be exalted on the ruin of my reputation and influence. This I am authorized to say, from undeniable facts in my own possession, from publications, the evident scope of which could not be mistaken, and from private detractions industriously circulated. ————, it is commonly supposed, bore the second part of the cabal; and General Conway, I know, was a very active and malignant partisan; but I have good reason to believe that their machinations have recoiled most sensibly upon themselves.

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joined this faction, was appointed inspector-general, and was elevated above brigadiers older than himself, to the rank of major-general. There were other evidences, that, if the hold which the commander in chief had taken of the affections and confidence of the army and of the nation could be shaken, the party in Congress which was disposed to change their general, was far from being contemptible in point of numbers. But to loosen this hold was impossible. No better evidence of its strength can be given than the indignation with which the idea of such a change was received, even by the victorious troops who had fought and conquered under Gates. Even the northern army clung to Washington as the saviour of their country.

The machinations which were carrying on, possibly with good intentions, to diminish the well-earned reputation of the commander in chief, could not escape his notice. They however made no undue impression on his steady mind, nor did they in the slightest degree change one of his measures.* His sensibilities seem rather to have been

* The following extract of a letter from General Sullivan evidences their influence on others. He had been requested to consult with the general officers of his division on the subject of attacking the enemy. After stating their arguments against the measure, he concludes his letter thus: "Though I think they have much weight, yet I am so weary of the infernal

those of patriotism, of apprehension for his country, than of wounded pride. His desire to remain at the head of the army seemed rather to flow from the conviction that his retaining that station would be useful to his country, than from any gratification his high rank might furnish to ambition. When, to his private friends he unbosomed himself, the feelings and sentiments he disclosed were worthy of Washington. They were such as evidence the purity of his mind, and the correctness of his judgment.

To Mr. Laurens, the president of Congress, and his private friend, who, in an unofficial letter, had communicated to him an anonymous charge laid before him as president, containing heavy accusations against the commander in chief, he thus expressed himself: "I cannot sufficiently express the obligation I feel towards you for your friendship and politeness upon an occasion in which I am so deeply interested. I was not unapprised that a malignant faction had been for some time forming to my prejudice, which, conscious as I am of

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fernal clamour of the Pennsylvanians, that I am for satisfying them at all events, and risking every consequence in an action. Possibly we may be successful; if not, they may be satisfied: and even Congress itself may gain experience, and learn to censure with more caution. Possibly a defeat may have this good effect, and a victory will bring with it its own reward."

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having ever done all in my power to answer the important purposes of the trust reposed in me, could not but give me some pain on a personal account: but my chief concern arises from an apprehension of the dangerous consequences which intestine dissensions may produce to the common cause.

"As I have no other view than to promote the public good, and am unambitious of honours not founded in the approbation of my country, I would not desire in the least degree to suppress a free spirit of inquiry into any part of my conduct that even faction itself may deem reprehensible. The anonymous paper handed you exhibits many serious charges; and it is my wish that it may be submitted to Congress. This I am the more inclined to, as the suppression or concealment may possibly involve you in embarrassments hereafter, since it is uncertain how many, or who, may be privy to the contents.

"My enemies take an ungenerous advantage of me. They know the delicacy of my situation, and that motives of policy deprive me of the defence I might otherwise make against their insidious attacks. They know I cannot combat their insinuations, however injurious, without disclosing secrets it is of the utmost moment to conceal. But why should I expect to be exempt from censure, the unfailing lot of an elevated station?

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Merit and talents, which I cannot pretend to rival, have ever been subject to it. My heart tells me it has been my unremitted aim to do the best which circumstances would permit; yet I may have been very often mistaken in my judgment of the means, and may in many instances deserve the imputation of error."*

Fortunately for America, the only effect of these combinations was to excite a considerable degree

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* The following extract is taken from a letter written about the same time to a gentleman in New England, who had expressed some anxious apprehensions, occasioned by a report that the commander in chief had determined to resign his station in the army.

"I can assure you that no person ever heard me drop an expression that had a tendency to resignation. The same principles that led me to embark in the opposition to the arbitrary claims of Great Britain operate with additional force at this day; nor is it my desire to withdraw my services while they are considered of importance in the present contest: but to report a design of this kind is among the arts which those who are endeavouring to effect a change are practising to bring it to pass. I have said, and I still do say, that there is not an officer in the service of the United States that would return to the sweets of domestic life with more heart-felt joy than I should. But I would have this declaration accompanied by these sentiments, that, while the public are satisfied with my endeavours, I mean not to shrink from the cause: but the moment her voice, not that of faction, calls upon me to resign, I shall do it with as much pleasure as ever the weary traveller retired to rest."

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of resentment, which was directed entirely against those believed to be engaged in them.

While the general was in perfect possession of the unfavourable disposition of some members of Congress towards him, and had just received the memorial of the legislature of Pennsylvania concerning his going into winter quarters, he also discovered the failure in the commissary's department already mentioned, and that there was not on hand a single pound of meat for the use of his army. On this occasion he assumed a style to which, in his letters to Congress, he was but little accustomed, and addressed that body in terms of energy and plainness he had used on no former occasion, but which the present emergency seemed to require.

"Full as I was in my representation of the matters in the commissary's department yesterday (Dec. 23d), fresh and more powerful reasons oblige me to add, that I am now convinced beyond a doubt, that unless some great and capital change suddenly takes place in that line, this army must inevitably be reduced to one or other of these three things—to starve, dissolve, or disperse in order to obtain subsistence. Rest assured, sir, that this is not an exaggerated picture, and that I have abundant reason to suppose what I say.

"Saturday afternoon, receiving information that the enemy, in force, had left the city, and were.

were advancing towards Derby with apparent design to forage and draw subsistence from that part of the country, I ordered the troops to be in readiness, that I might give every opposition in my power; when, to my great mortification, I was not only informed, but convinced, that the men were unable to stir on account of provision; and that a dangerous mutiny, begun the night before, and which with difficulty was suppressed by the spirited exertions of some officers, was still much to be apprehended from the want of this article.

"This brought forth the only commissary in the purchasing line in this camp, and with him this melancholy and alarming truth, that he had not a single hoof of any kind to slaughter, and not more than twenty-five barrels of flour! From hence, form an opinion of our situation, when I add, that he could not tell when to expect any.

"All I could do under these circumstances was to send out a few light parties to watch and harass the enemy, whilst other parties were instantly detached different ways to collect, if possible, as much provision as would satisfy the present pressing wants of the soldiery. But will this answer? No, sir. Three or four days of bad weather would prove our destruction. What then is to become of the army this winter? And if we are now as often without provisions as with them, what is to become

become of us in the spring, when our force will be collected, with the aid, perhaps, of militia, to take advantage of an early campaign, before the enemy can be reinforced? These are considerations of great magnitude, meriting the closest attention, and will, when my own reputation is so intimately connected with, and to be affected by the event, justify my saying, that the present commissaries are by no means equal to the execution of the office, or that the disaffection of the people is past all belief. The misfortune, however, does, in my opinion, proceed from both causes; and though I have been tender heretofore of giving any opinion, or of lodging complaints, as the change in that department took place contrary to my judgment, and the consequences thereof were predicted, yet, finding that the inactivity of the army, whether for want of provisions, clothes, or other essentials, is charged to my account, not only by the common vulgar, but by those in power, it is time to speak plain in exculpation of myself. With truth then I can declare, that no man, in my opinion, ever had his measures more impeded than I have, by every department of the army. Since the month of July we have had no assistance from the quarter-master-general; and to want of assistance from this department, the commissary-general charges great part of his deficiency. To this I am to add, that notwithstanding it is a standing order

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(and often repeated) that the troops shall always have two days provisions by them, that they might be ready at any sudden call; yet scarcely any opportunity has ever offered of taking advantage of the enemy, that has not been either totally obstructed or greatly impeded on this account: and this, the great and crying evil, is not all; soap, vinegar, and other articles allowed by Congress, we see none of, nor have we seen them, I believe, since the battle of Brandywine. The first, indeed, we have now little occasion for, few men having more than one shirt, many only the moiety of one, and some none at all. In addition to which, as a proof of the little benefit received from a clothier-general, and, at the same time, as a further proof of the inability of an army under the circumstances of this, to perform the common duties of soldiers (besides a number of men confined to hospitals for want of shoes, and others in farmers' houses on the same account), we have, by a field return this day made, no less than two thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight men now in camp unfit for duty, because they are barefoot, and otherwise naked. By the same return, it appears, that our whole strength in continental troops (including the eastern brigades which have joined us since the surrender of General Burgoyne), exclusive of the Maryland troops sent to Wilmington, amounts to no more than eight thousand two

hundred in camp, fit for duty; notwithstanding which, and that since the fourth instant, our number fit for duty, from the hardships and exposures they have undergone, particularly from the want of blankets, have decreased near two thousand men, we find gentlemen, without knowing whether the army was really going into winter quarters or not (for I am sure no resolution of mine would warrant the remonstrance), reprobating the measure as much as if they thought the soldiers were made of stocks or stones, and equally insensible of frost and snow; and moreover, as if they conceived it easily practicable for an inferior army, under the disadvantages I have described ours to be, which are by no means exaggerated, to confine a superior one, in all respects well appointed, and provided for a winter's campaign, within the city of Philadelphia, and to cover from depredation and waste the states of Pennsylvania, Jersey, &c. But what makes this matter still more extraordinary in my eye is, that these very gentlemen, who were well apprised of the nakedness of the troops, from ocular demonstration, who thought their own soldiers worse clad than others, and advised me, near a month ago; to postpone the execution of a plan I was about to adopt, in consequence of a resolve of Congress, for seizing clothes, under strong assurances that an ample supply would be collected in ten days, agreeably to a decree of the state, not

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one article of which, by the by, is yet come to hand, should think a winter's campaign, and the covering these states from the invasion of an enemy, so easy and practicable a business. I can assure those gentlemen, that it is a much easier and less distressing thing to draw remonstrances in a comfortable room, by a good fire-side, than to occupy a cold bleak hill, and sleep under frost and snow without clothes or blankets: however, although they seem to have little feeling for the naked and distressed soldiers, I feel superabundantly for them, and, from my soul, pity those miseries which it is not in my power either to relieve or prevent."

The statement made by the general in the letter just recited, of the want of clothes and blankets, was by no means highly coloured.

Neither the bodies nor the feet of his soldiers were protected from the frosts and cold of the inclement season into which the campaign had been extended. After being exposed through the day to the rigours of winter, night afforded no relief. A warm blanket was a luxury in which very few participated.

The situation of the army in this respect did not arise from the inattention or the neglect of Congress. Measures had been very early taken for the importation of clothes, but from the variety of accidents to which they were exposed, and

the great difficulties attending their execution, they had not yet produced the effect which had been expected from them. A clothier-general had also been appointed, with deputies in the several states, but his collections had been very inconsiderable. The state governments had been earnestly applied to for an immediate supply, and extensive powers over individual property had been given to the commander in chief; but the exercise of these powers was beyond measure odious, and the subject on which they could act had been greatly diminished by the unfortunate non-importation agreements which preceded the war, by the immense difficulties attending commerce since its commencement, by the loss of several of the great sea-port towns, which were in possession of the enemy, and by the individual consumption of such articles as were in the country—a consumption far exceeding the supply as yet drawn from domestic manufacture.

In the eastern country, where the sea coast was too extensive to be completely guarded, and where the people were more inclined to maritime enterprise, supplies both of arms and clothes were attainable in a much more considerable degree than in the middle states. Their respective governments were not entirely inattentive to the wants of their troops, consequently, the men from New England, though by no means properly clothed, did

did not suffer to the same degree with those from states less fortunately circumstanced. But from the large sums of money expended in that country for the support of the army, and perhaps in consequence of their more successful commercial operations, depreciation had been much more rapid in New England than in the southern, or even in the middle states, and a consequent high nominal value was placed on imported articles. Whether the real course of depreciation justified the prices at which merchants held their goods, or an augmentation of price had been occasioned by a knowledge of the distresses of the army, Congress deemed the terms on which some large contracts had been made by the deputy clothier-general in Massachusetts so exorbitant, as to forbid their execution. They at the same time addressed a letter to the state government, requesting that the goods should be seized for the use of the army, at prices to be fixed by the state legislature, in pursuance of a resolution of the twenty-second of November, recommending that measure.

These recommendations from Congress, so far as they exhorted the states to supply the wants of the soldiers, were strongly supported by the remonstrances of the general. In his letters to the several governors of states, he represented the very existence of the army, and the continuance of the contest, as depending on their exertions in this

respect. In a circular letter, he says, "No pains, no efforts, on the part of the states, can be too great for this purpose. It is not easy to give you a just and accurate idea of the sufferings of the army at large, and the loss of men on this account. Were they to be minutely detailed, your feelings would be wounded, and the relation would probably be not received without a degree of doubt and discredit. We had in camp on the 23d instant (December) by a field return then taken, not less than two thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight men unfit for duty, by reason of their being barefoot, and otherwise naked. Besides this number, sufficiently distressing of itself, there are many others detained in hospitals, and crowded into farmers' houses, for the same causes. The care and attention of the states will, I flatter myself, be in a most particular manner directed to the supply of shoes, stockings, and blankets, as the expenditure of those articles is, from the common operations and accidents of war, far greater than of any others. In a word, the united and respective exertions of the states cannot be too great, too vigorous in this interesting work, and we shall never have a fair and just prospect of success, till our troops, officers and soldiers, shall be better provided for than they are, or have been."

The various exertions made in every direction, at length produced, in a great degree, the effect desired;

desired; and in no subsequent winter were the sufferings of the troops comparable to those sustained in the winter of 1777-8.

The uncommon proportion of sick in the American army has often been noticed, and the causes to which that calamity might be attributed, assigned. Their food was not adapted to their habits, and to the climate. Perhaps from the extreme scarcity and dearness of the article, a sufficient quantity of salted provisions was not mingled with the rations delivered to them. Vinegar was very inadequately supplied, and for a considerable time, vegetables were scarcely known in the camp. Great exertions were made by the general to correct these improprieties, but their correction was a labour of infinite difficulty, slow in its progress, and essentially affected by the unfortunate derangements made by Congress in the commissary department. This cause was unquestionably of extensive operation, but the want of tents for the summer, and clothes for the winter, was perhaps still more so. Even those not returned unfit for duty, were in general so wretchedly clothed, that they were by no means in a fit condition for the hard service they were under the necessity of performing. The hospitals were, therefore, unusually crouded with sick, and were unfortunately so ill supplied, that from thence a very unusual number were conducted to the grave.

In a letter to Governor Livingston on this subject, General Washington observed, "I sincerely feel for the unhappy condition of our poor fellows in the hospitals, and wish my powers to relieve them were equal to my inclination. It is but too melancholy a truth, that our hospital stores of every kind are lamentably scanty and deficient. I fear there is no prospect of their being soon in a better condition. Our difficulties and distresses are certainly great, and such as wound the feelings of humanity. Our sick naked! our well naked! our unfortunate men in captivity naked!"

These distressing circumstances tended greatly to diminish the army; but they were not the only causes in operation which were productive of that effect. The calamities produced by short inlistments were not, even yet, entirely exhausted. Several of the states finding it impracticable to recruit the quotas assigned to them, had in some degree supplied the deficiency by draughts to serve for the year. Their terms of service were now expiring, and no hope existed of retaining them for a longer time.

It was also found extremely difficult to obtain from the militia, either of Pennsylvania or Delaware, the small aids which, during the winter, were expected or required from them.

To prevent the country people from going into Philadelphia on the east side of the Schuylkill, and supplying

supplying the market by that route, was the duty assigned to the militia of Pennsylvania, assisted by Major Jamieson with two troops of cavalary, and the state had been required to keep one thousand men constantly in service for that purpose. For a time this number was kept up, and the expected service performed under General Potter, a very active and vigilant officer of militia; but the state began soon to relax in supplying the men required, and instead of one thousand, their numbers were often less than one hundred, and of consequence the roads were seldom sufficiently guarded.

To anticipate General Howe, who, it was understood, had contemplated a post at Wilmington, General Smallwood was detached to that place, and as fears were entertained that an attempt might be made to dislodge him, the militia of that state were directed to reinforce him; but these directions seem to have been entirely disregarded.

In the mean time, the continental army was not in a condition to supply these deficiencies. They were assiduously employed in erecting their huts, completing the bridge over the Schuylkill, and fortifying their camp, a work of great and pressing necessity, but which unavoidably experienced considerable delays, in consequence of the great proportion of the soldiers rendered incapable of labour in the open air, by the want of clothing.

To recruit the army for the next campaign, was

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an object of which the commander in chief felt the importance, and laboured to impress it on the several states, as well as on Congress: but it was an object, the difficulty of accomplishing which continually increased. From the depreciation of paper money, and from other causes, no hope remained of obtaining any respectable number of men by voluntary inlistment, and coercive means could only be employed by the respective states. To persuade them to apply sufficient energies to this subject, with the requisite dispatch, required all the influence of General Washington, and his letters urged them, by every motive which could operate on the human mind, to meet with sufficient means the crisis of the war, which he apprehended was now approaching.

He exhorted them to place no confidence in foreign aid, but to depend on their own internal strength and resources, for the maintenance of their independence. He did not doubt but that Britain would, if not prevented by a war in Europe, make great exertions to reinforce her armies in America, and effect the objects of the war. Only correspondent exertions to keep in the field a continental army, at least equal to that of the enemy, could prevent their success.

He enclosed to each state a return of its troops on the continental establishment, thereby exhibiting to each its own deficiency, which each was strongly urged to supply.

To those who had not yet made use of coercive means, he stated, that the resort had been made by others with good effect; and he represented to all, the necessity of using those means early enough to enable him to anticipate the enemy in taking the field.

In addition to the other ills which threatened the destruction of the army, one yet remains to be mentioned, not of less magnitude, though less calculated to arrest the attention, than those which have been already enumerated. The depreciation of the paper bills had now become so considerable, and the real difficulties under which commerce laboured, had so enhanced the price of all imported articles, that the pay of an officer was not only no compensation for devoting his whole time to the service of the public, but could not even furnish him with those absolute necessaries, which might give him a decent appearance, or cover his person from the extremes of heat and cold, to which he was exposed. Those who possessed small patrimonial estates, found them melting away, and others were absolutely unable to appear in the character of gentlemen. Such distressing circumstances could not fail to excite a general disgust with the service.

In an army raised as was that of the United States, great inequality of character among the officers

officers was to be expected. The hard and active service in which it had been engaged, was well calculated to ascertain the real merits of each individual, and to exhibit those discriminations which, in the calm of domestic life, were not easily discerned. It was necessary to purge the army of persons unfit to hold commissions; and the number, and severity of the sentences of the courts martial, manifested their determination to do so. Yet the regiments were so miserably incomplete, that a surplus number of officers still remained, for whom it was difficult to obtain commands.

It might, therefore, be supposed, that the general disinclination for the service, excited by the condition to which the officers found themselves reduced, was not an evil much to be regarded, while a greater number remained than could be usefully employed. Than this, no opinion could be more incorrect. Among those who offered their commissions to the commander in chief, were found many, who, possessing most military pride, and therefore feeling most sensibly the degradation connected with poverty and rags, promised most to be the ornaments of the army, to exhibit courage in battle, and to assist most in maintaining those principles of discipline and regularity, so essential to every military establishment.

Nor could a hope be entertained, that the mischief

chief would stop with the mere loss of officers, whose continuance in service might promote the public interests.

A general indifference about holding a commission, a general opinion that an obligation was conferred, and not received by continuing in the army, was extremely unfavourable, not only to that spirit of emulation which stimulates to bolder deeds than are required, but to a complete execution of orders, and a rigid observance of duty.

An officer, whose pride was in any degree wounded, whose caprice was not indulged, who apprehended censure for a fault which probably his carelessness about remaining in the service had seduced him to commit, was ready to throw up a commission which, instead of being valuable, was a burthen almost too heavy to be borne.

The commander in chief watched with extreme anxiety the progress of a temper, which, though just commencing, he feared must increase with the cause that produced it, and which threatened the most fatal effects: he was, therefore, early and earnest in pressing on the attention of Congress the consideration of this important subject.

The weak and broken condition of the continental regiments, the various remonstrances of the general, the numerous complaints received from every quarter, determined Congress, on the 10th of January, to depute a committee of their body who

who should reside in camp during the winter, and, in concert with General Washington, investigate perfectly the state of the army, and report such reforms as the public good might require.

This committee repaired to head quarters in the month of January. Having consulted his officers extensively, the commander in chief prepared and laid before them for consideration a general statement, in which a very comprehensive view was taken of the condition of the army, and in which the remedies necessary for the correction of existing abuses, as well as those regulations which he deemed essential to its future prosperity, were clearly and fully designated.

This paper exhibits the actual state of the army, and discloses defects of real magnitude in the existing arrangements. In perusing it, the reader is struck with the numerous difficulties, in addition to those resulting from mere inferiority of numbers, with which the commander in chief was under the necessity of contending. The memorial is too long to be inserted; but there are parts which ought not to be entirely overlooked. The neglect of the very serious representations it contained respecting a future permanent provision for the officers, threatened, at an after period, to be productive of such pernicious effects, that their insertion in this place will not, it is presumed, be unacceptable.

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He recommended, as the basis on which was to be erected every salutary reform, a comfortable provision for the officers, which should render their commissions valuable; to effect which, the future, as well as the present, ought to be contemplated.

"A long and continual sacrifice of individual interest for the general good, ought not," he said, "to be expected or required. The nature of man must be changed, before institutions built on the presumptive truth of such a principle can succeed."

"This position," he added, "is supported by the conduct of the officers in the American army, as well as by that of all other men. At the commencement of the dispute, in the first effusions of zeal, when it was believed the service would be temporary, they entered into it without regard to pecuniary considerations. But finding its duration much longer than had been at first expected, and that instead of deriving advantages from the hardships and dangers to which they were exposed, they were, on the contrary, losers by their patriotism, and fell far short of even a competency for their wants, they have gradually abated in their ardour, and, with many, an entire disinclination to the service, under the present circumstances, has taken place. To this, in an eminent degree, must be ascribed the frequent resignations

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daily happening, and the more frequent importunities for permission to resign, from some officers of the greatest merit.

"To this also may be ascribed the apathy, inattention, and neglect of duty, which pervade all ranks, and which will necessarily continue and increase while an officer, instead of gaining any thing, is impoverished by his commission, and conceives he is conferring, not receiving, a favour, in holding it. There can be no sufficient tie on men possessing such sentiments. Nor can any method be adopted to oblige those to a punctual discharge of duty, who are indifferent about their continuance in the service, and are often seeking a pretext to discharge themselves from it. Punishment in this case will be unavailing; but when an officer's commission is made valuable to him, and he fears to lose it, you may exact obedience from him.

"It is not indeed consistent with reason or justice, that one set of men should make a sacrifice of property, domestic ease and happiness; encounter the rigours of the field, the perils and vicissitudes of war, without some adequate compensation, to obtain those blessings which every citizen will enjoy in common with them. It must also be a comfortless reflection to any man, that, after he may have contributed to secure the rights of his country, at the risk of his life and the ruin of

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his fortune, there will be no provision made to prevent himself and his family from sinking into indigence and wretchedness."

With these, and other arguments, General Washington recommended, in addition to present compensations, "a half pay and pensionary establishments for the army."

"I urge my sentiments," said he, "with the greater freedom, because I cannot, and shall not receive the smallest benefit from the establishment, and can have no other inducement for proposing it, than a full conviction of its utility and propriety."

Having reviewed the whole existing military establishment in all its parts; having pointed out the faults of that establishment, and suggested the best corrections which the resources of the United States could furnish, this statement concludes with saying: "Upon the whole, gentlemen, I doubt not you are fully impressed with the defects of our present military system, and with the necessity of speedy and decisive measures to place it on a satisfactory footing. The disagreeable picture I have given you of the wants and sufferings of the army, and the discontents reigning among the officers, is a just representation of evils equally melancholy and important; and unless effectual remedies be applied, without

loss of time, the most alarming and ruinous consequences are to be apprehended."

The wants and distresses of the army, when actually seen by the committee of Congress, made on them a much deeper impression than could have been received from any statements whatever. They endeavoured to communicate to Congress the sentiments created in their own bosoms, and to correct as speedily as possible, the errors which had been committed. But a numerous body, if it deliberates at all, proceeds slowly in the conduct of executive affairs, and existing mischiefs, especially those growing out of their own measures, are seldom promptly corrected.

Much of the sufferings of the army was attributed to neglects of the quarter-master's department, which, notwithstanding the repeated remonstrances of the commander in chief, had long been permitted to remain without a head. This subject was very early taken up by the committee, and proper representations made respecting it.*

* The following is an extract from a letter addressed by the committee of Congress, which was taken among the papers of Mr. Lawrens, and is to be found in Mr. Stedman's History of the War.

"Sir,

We had flattered ourselves, that, before this time, the pleasure of Congress would be made known to us, respecting the

Congress, though really earnest in their wishes to make the necessary arrangements, and labour-

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the quarter-master's department. We fear our letter upon this subject has miscarried, or the consideration of it yielded to other business. You will, therefore, pardon us, sir, when we again solicit your attention to it, as an object of the last importance; on which not only the future success of your arms, but the present existence of your army, immediately depends. The influence of this office is so diffusive through every part of your military system, that neither the wisdom of arrangement, the spirit of enterprise, or favourable opportunity, will be of any avail, if this great wheel in the machine stops, or moves heavily. We find ourselves embarrassed in entering on this, lest a bare recital of facts should carry an imputation (which we do not intend) on those gentlemen who have lately conducted it. We are sensible great and just allowances are to be made for the peculiarity of their situation, and we are, perhaps, not fully acquainted with all their difficulties. It is our duty, sir, to inform you it is not our intention to censure; and, be assured, nothing but a sense of the obligation we are under, to postpone all other considerations to the public safety, could induce us to perform the unpleasing task. We find, sir, the property of the continent dispersed over the whole country; not an encampment, route of the army, or considerable road, but abounds with waggons left to the mercy of the weather, and the will of the inhabitants; large quantities of intrenching tools have, in like manner, been left in various hands, under no other security that we can learn, than the honesty of those who have them in possession. No less than three thousand spades and shovels, and the like number of tomahawks, have been lately discovered and collected in the vicinity of the camp, by an order from one of the general officers. In the same

ing assiduously on the complicated duties assigned them, still remained under the influence of those

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way, a quantity of tents and tent cloth, after having lain a whole summer in a farmer's barn, and unknown to the officer of the department, was lately discovered and brought to camp, by a special order from the general. From these instances we presume there may be many other stores yet unknown and uncollected, which require immediate care and attention.

When, in compliance with the expectations of Congress, and the wishes of the country, the army was thrown into huts, instead of retiring into more distant and convenient quarters, the troops justly expected every comfort which the surrounding country could afford. Among those, a providential care in the article of straw, would probably have saved the lives of many of your brave soldiers, who have now paid the great debt of nature. Unprovided with this, or materials to raise them from the cold and wet earth, sickness and mortality have spread through their quarters in an astonishing degree. Notwithstanding the diligence of the physicians and surgeons, of whom we hear no complaint, the sick and dead list has increased one third in the last week's returns, which was one third greater than the week preceding; and from the present inclement weather, will probably increase in a much greater proportion. Nothing, sir, can equal their sufferings, except the patience and fortitude with which the faithful part of the army endure them. Those of a different character desert in great numbers.

We must also observe, that a number of the troops have now some time been prepared for inoculation; but the operation must be delayed for want of this (straw) and other necessaries, which ought to be provided by this department. We need not point out the fatal consequences of this delay, in

opinions which had already produced such mischievous effects in the commissary department.

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in forming a new army, or the preservation of this. Almost every day furnishes instances of the small-pox in the natural way. Hitherto such vigilance and care has been used, that the contagion has not spread; but surely it is highly incumbent upon us, if possible, to annihilate the danger.

We need not point out the effects this circumstance will have on the new-draughted troops, if not carefully guarded against; they are too obvious to need enumeration. In conference with the forage-master on this subject, (which, though in appearance trivial, is really important) he acquainted us, that, though out of his line, he would have procured it, if waggons could have been furnished him for that purpose.

The want of waggons and horses for the ordinary, as well as the extraordinary occasions of the army, presses upon us, if possible, with equal force; almost every species of camp transportation is now performed by men, who, without a murmur, patiently yoke themselves to little carriages of their own making, or load their wood and provisions on their backs. Should the enemy, encouraged by the growing weakness of your troops, be led to make a successful impression on your camp, your artillery would now undoubtedly fall into their hands, for want of horses to remove it. But these are small and tolerable evils, when compared with the imminent danger of your troops perishing with famine, or dispersing in search of food. The commissaries, in addition to their supplies of live cattle, which are precarious, have found a quantity of pork in New Jersey, of which, by a failure of waggons, not one barrel has reached the camp.

The orders were given for that purpose so early as the fourth of January. In yesterday's conference with the gene-

They were still disposed to divide duties, and thereby create an immediate dependence on their own body, of persons who held offices which were in their own nature mere subdivisions of a greater

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ral, he informed us, that some brigades had been four days without meat; and that even the common soldiers had been at his quarters to make known their wants. At present, sir, there is not one gentleman of any rank in this department, though the duties of the office require a constant and unremitting attention. In whatever view, therefore, the subject presents itself, we trust you will discern, that the most essential interests are connected with it. The season of preparation for the next campaign is passing swiftly away. Be assured, sir, that its operations will be ineffectual, either for offence or protection, if an arrangement is not immediately made, and the most vigorous measures used to procure the necessary supplies. Permit us to say, that a moment's time should not be lost, in placing a man of approved abilities and extensive capacity at the head of the department, who will restore it to some degree of regularity and order; whose provident care will immediately relieve the present wants of the army, and extend itself to those which must be satisfied, before we can expect vigour, enterprise, or success. When your committee reflect upon the increased difficulties of procuring waggons, horses, tents, and the numerous train of articles dependent on this office, without which your army cannot even move, they feel the greatest anxiety, lest the utmost skill, diligence, and address, will prove ineffectual to satisfy the growing demand. All other considerations vanish before this object; and we most earnestly wish Congress may be impressed in a proper degree, with its necessity and importance.

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department, under the control of the chief of which, the public interests would require them to be entirely placed. In this temper, it was resolved, that the department of the quarter-master-general should be immediately executed on the following plan:

First—The military line to be stiled the quarter-master-general's, which is to include the regulating of marches, encampments, order of battle, &c. &c. as described in the books of the profession.

This office not to have the disposal of public money, except small occasional sums for defraying petty expences in the army.

Second—The commissary of forage, who is to be confined to that article in his purchases.

Third—The commissary for horses and waggons.

Fourth—The agent for the purchase of tents, intrenching tools, the building of barracks, and for all the smaller supplies of the department.

The three last to be governed in their purchases by the estimates and orders of the quarter-master-general or the board of war.

This plan not being approved in camp, was never carried into execution; and it was not till the month of March that the system was definitively settled. Major-general Greene was then appoint-

ed quarter-master-general, with two assistants. Previous to that time, the duties of the department, so far as they related to the supplies for the camp, were principally performed by the officers.

Not long after this, the embarrassments which had been imposed on the commissary department, and which had been maintained with great perseverance, were also taken off. The commissary-general of purchases was put in reality at the head of his department, with power to appoint and remove his assistants, and, to ensure proper attention to the wants of the army, he was placed under the immediate direction of the commander in chief. Mr. Wadsworth, of Connecticut, a person well qualified for the office, was appointed to it, but this appointment did not take place till the month of April. In the mean time, the mischiefs and miseries resulting from the unfortunate system which had been adopted were incalculable.

The letter of General Washington to the committee, which has been mentioned, seems to have formed the basis of their reports to Congress, and the system it recommended appears to have been generally adopted.

Even the repugnance felt by the government to a half-pay establishment was in some degree overcome;

overcome; but the measures first taken, on this interesting subject, were not sufficient in themselves, nor were they taken till many very valuable officers were lost to the service.*

* The first resolution which allowed half-pay for seven years under many restrictions, passed on the 15th of May. In the mean time, the commander in chief exerted all his influence to prevent the resignation of good officers, by opposing their wishes in this respect, and exciting in them the hope that Congress would not continue inattentive to their situation. The following extract from a letter to Brigadier-general Glover, exhibits one among very many efforts of the same kind. "Excuse me, sir," said he to that officer, "if I hesitate to give my concurrence to the desire you express of quitting the army. I have too high an opinion of your value as an officer, to do any thing which may contribute to your relinquishing that character. My earnest wish is, that you may continue in it. The spirit of resigning, which is now become almost epidemical, is truly painful and alarming. This spirit, prevailing among many of the best officers, from various inducements, if persisted in, must deeply wound the common cause. You cannot but be convinced, the situation of the army is such, that it can ill bear the loss of good officers; and such would do well to consider how much they put to the hazard, by doing any thing to weaken the sinews of our cause at so critical a time. I am persuaded, if these ideas were properly realised, that they would endure great inconveniences, and make great sacrifices, rather than withdraw their services. I am fully sensible of the disadvantages officers have hitherto laboured under from the insufficiency of their appointments; but measures have been, and I flatter myself others still more effectual will be taken to remedy this evil.

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The number of regiments, and the appointments on each state were taken by Congress precisely as suggested by the general, and it was resolved that the several states be required forthwith to fill up by draughts from their militia, or any other way that should be effectual, their respective battalions of continental troops; at the same time it was expressly ordered, that no prisoners of war, or deserters from the enemy should be enlisted, draughted, or returned, to serve in the continental army.

While Congress was deliberating on the reforms proposed, the distresses of the army were approaching their *acmé*, and its absolute dissolution was threatened. Early in February, the commissaries gave notice that the country, to a great distance, was actually exhausted; and that it would be impracticable to obtain supplies to support the army longer than to the end of that month. Already the scarcity which was threatened began to manifest itself, and the provisions issued were often very bad in quality, and insufficient in quantity. More serious apprehensions were entertained that there would be a total failure in the article of flesh than in any other; and, as New England was the

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I am impressing the necessity of it by every argument in my power, and you may assure yourself that no endeavour of mine will be omitted to remove so just a cause of complaint."

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great beef country of America, the general turned his eyes to that quarter as the only one which could afford relief.

Not content with the instructions given by the commissary in camp to his assistant in Connecticut, the general addressed him personally, with a strong representation of the extremity to which they were verging, and conjured him, by every motive which ought to influence him in his official capacity, by his good wishes to the army, and to the cause of his country, to make every possible effort to afford, without a moment's loss of time, the assistance which was so much needed. As a stimulus to greater exertions, and to assure himself of all the aid which could be derived from the state authorities, he addressed himself, at the same time, to Governor Trumbull of Connecticut, whose ardent co-operation in the public service he had so often experienced, and to whom, after stating the past and present dangerous condition of the army, he added, "What is still more distressing, I am assured by Colonel Blaine, deputy purchasing-commissary in the middle district, comprehending the states of Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, that they are nearly exhausted, and that the most vigorous and active exertions on his part will not procure more than sufficient to supply the army during this month, if so long-

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This being the case, and as any relief that can be obtained from the more southern states will be but partial, trifling, and of a day, we must turn our views to the eastward, and lay our account of support from thence. Without it, we cannot but disband. I must therefore, sir, entreat you, in the most earnest terms, and by that zeal which has eminently distinguished your character in the present arduous struggle, to give every countenance to the person or persons employed in the purchasing line in your state, and to urge them to the most vigorous efforts to forward supplies of cattle from time to time, and thereby prevent such a melancholy and alarming catastrophe."

In the apprehension that the resources of the commissary department would entirely fail still earlier than had been reported, and before the distant supplies he had taken measures to obtain could reach him; and that the enemy designed to make another incursion into the country round Philadelphia, to glean what yet remained in possession of the inhabitants; he detached General Wayne with orders to seize all horses fit for cavalry or for draught, all cattle and sheep fit for slaughter, as well as every species of forage proper for the use of an army, within fifteen miles of the Delaware, between the Schuylkill and Brandywine. He was also ordered to destroy the forage

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on the islands between Philadelphia and Chester, which was so much exposed to the enemy, that it would be impracticable to bring it off.

Actuated by motives which had been already stated, the inhabitants endeavoured, as much as possible, to defeat the object of the foraging party. Their provisions and teams were secreted, and they gave to the country every appearance of having been entirely pillaged of those articles which could be usefully employed for military purposes. Before any sufficient aid could be furnished by these means, the bread as well as the meat was exhausted, and an absolute famine prevailed in the camp. "I have nothing to add, my lord," said General Huntingdon, in his report to Lord Stirling, the major-general of the day, "but that the camp is in a melancholy condition for want of provisions, and that there is a great danger that a famine will break up the army." The report was closed by Lord Stirling with saying, "I have only to add, that the complaints of the want of provisions and forage have become universal and violent. Every officer speaks of it with dread of the probable consequences."

General Varnum, in his report at the same time, said, "I must add that the situation of the camp is such, that in all human probability the army must soon dissolve. Many of the troops are destitute of meat, and are several days in arrear. The horses

horses are dying for want of forage. The country in the vicinity of the camp is exhausted. There cannot be a moral certainty of bettering our circumstances while we continue here."

In an emergency so pressing, the commander in chief, who could derive no sort of aid from the commissary department, used every effort to feed his hungry army. General Greene, with a strong detachment, was ordered out to obtain in the country, by any means whatever, an immediate supply. Captain Lee, whose sagacity and activity had long engaged particular attention, was detached to the state of Delaware, and the adjacent parts of Maryland; and Colonel Tilghman into Jersey. At the same time, letters written by the committee of Congress in camp, stating the situation of public affairs, were dispatched to the governors of several states, accompanied with letters from General Washington, urging them to the greatest exertions for his immediate relief. The situation of his army, and his own feelings, are thus stated in a letter to Governor Clinton of New York. "It is with great reluctance I trouble you upon a subject which does not properly fall within your province; but it is a subject which occasions me more distress than I have felt since the commencement of the war, and which loudly demands the most zealous exertions of every person of weight and authority, who is interested

terested in the success of our affairs. I mean the present dreadful situation of the army for want of provisions, and the miserable prospect for the future. It is more alarming than you will probably conceive; for to form a just idea, it were necessary to be on the spot. For some days past, there has been little less than a famine in camp. A part of the army has been a week without any kind of flesh, and the rest three or four days. Naked and starving as they are, we cannot enough admire the incomparable patience and fidelity of the soldiery, that they have not been ere this time excited by their sufferings to a general mutiny and dispersion. Strong symptoms, however, of discontent have appeared in particular instances, and nothing but the most active efforts every where can long avert so shocking a catastrophe.

"Our present sufferings are not all. There is no foundation laid for any adequate relief hereafter. All the magazines provided in the states of New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland, and all the immediate additional supplies they seem capable of affording, will not be sufficient to support the army more than a month longer, if so long. Very little has been done to the eastward, and as little to the southward; and whatever we have a right to expect from those quarters, must necessarily be very remote, and is indeed more precarious than could be wished. When the afore-

mentioned

mentioned supplies are exhausted, what a terrible crisis must ensue, unless all the energy of the continent be exerted to provide a timely remedy!

"Impressed with this idea, I am, on my part, putting every engine to work that I can possibly think of, to prevent the fatal consequences we have so great reason to apprehend. I am calling upon all those whose stations and influence enable them to contribute aid on so important an occasion; and, from your well known zeal, I expect every thing within the compass of your power, every thing that the abilities and resources of the state over which you preside will admit. I am sensible of the disadvantages it labours under, from having been so long the scene of war, and that it must be exceedingly drained by the great demands to which it has been subject. But though you may not be able to contribute materially to our relief, you can, perhaps, do something towards it, and any assistance, however trifling in itself, will be of great moment at so critical a juncture, and will conduce to keeping the army together, till the commissary's department can be put upon a better footing, and effectual measures concerted to secure a permanent and competent supply. You will be the best judge of the method you can take; but if you can devise any means to procure a quantity of cattle, or other kind of flesh, for the use of this army, to be at camp in

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the course of a month, you will render a most essential service to the common cause."

Happily for America there was in the character of Washington, something which enabled him, notwithstanding the discordant materials of which his army was composed, to attach both his officers and soldiers so strongly to his person, that no distress could weaken their affection, nor impair the respect and veneration in which he was held by them. To this sentiment is greatly to be attributed the preservation of a respectable military force, under circumstances but too well calculated for its dissolution.

Through this severe experiment on their fortitude, the native Americans in general persevered steadily in the performance of their duty; but the conduct of the Europeans in general, who constituted a considerable part of the army, was much less laudable; and at no period of the war was desertion so frequent as during this winter. With the aid of those inhabitants who were friendly to the ancient government, they eluded the vigilance of the light parties who watched the roads, and great numbers escaped into Philadelphia with their arms. These were not the only recruits made by the British army in the course of the winter. The disaffected joined them in such numbers, as to add very sensibly to their strength.

In a few days, the army was rescued, by the

great exertions that have been mentioned, from the famine with which it had been threatened, and sufficient supplies of provisions were laid up in camp.* It was perceived that the difficulties, which had produced such melancholy effects, were created more by the want of due exertion in the commissary's department, and by the efforts of the people to save their stock for a better market, where it would be paid for in specie, than to any real deficiency in the article of food. There was, in fact, a scarcity in the neighbourhood of the camp, the appearance of which was added to by concealing in the woods and swamps, during the day, both horses and cattle; but they were searched out by General Greene, who, from the necessity of the case, foraged as in an enemy's country, and seized, for an immediate supply, every animal fit to slaughter. Captain Lee found large droves in the marsh meadows on the Delaware, preparing for Philadelphia, which he had the address to procure, without giving to the body of the people any additional irritation; and Colonel Tilghman

* The general orders issued, after the restoration of plenty to the camp, constitute one of the many evidences given by the American general, of his endeavours to reconcile the army to the most excessive hardships, and to diminish those hardships in their estimation; while his utmost efforts were employed with Congress to prevent them, and all his own feelings were harrowed by their magnitude.

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was able to collect very abundantly in Jersey. Every where great quantities of forage were found, and the principal difficulty experienced was in obtaining waggons to convey it to camp.

After supplying the immediate wants of the army, and destroying the forage in the islands, General Wayne was detached to the Jersy shore, for the purpose of securing the cattle on the eastern banks of the Delaware, and of destroying the forage which could not be removed.

These strong measures produced relief for the moment, and were certainly justified by the pressing wants of the army. But voluntary contracts formed the only solid source of permanent supply, which could safely be relied on. In Connecticut, these were made to a very great extent, and fat cattle were soon furnished abundantly from that state. Even this source of supply, however, had nearly been dried up, by one of those unwise measures, which can only be suggested by inexperience, and a superficial consideration of the most interesting subjects. Mistaking a real depreciation of money, for the extortion of avarice on the wants of the public, an attempt was made, under the recommendation of Congress, to limit prices by law; and this limitation, if persisted in, would once more have produced a famine in camp. On the representations from the commissary's department, Congress was at length made sensible of the

mischievous tendency of their resolutions for the regulation of prices, and they recommended to the several state legislatures a repeal of all laws on that subject.

About the beginning of February, the terms of the militia of Pennsylvania, who were stationed on the north-east of the Schuylkill to prevent the communication of the country people with Philadelphia, expired; and General Lacy, who had succeeded General Potter in that command, was left with less than one hundred men. A variety of accidents, to which plans depending for their execution entirely on militia must always be liable, procrastinated for some time the arrival of those who had been called out for the succeeding tour of duty; and, when they did arrive, they were without arms. As usual, the greater part of those in the hands of their predecessors were lost, or carried home by the individuals who had used them. In this interval, while the country was necessarily unguarded, the first droves of fatted cattle were passing through it from Connecticut to the camp. One of these was met, about thirty miles from Philadelphia, by one of the disaffected, who, as was at the time alleged, passed on the driver for a commissary belonging to the American army, and having, in this character, billetted them at a neighbouring farm, of which the owner held principles alike unfavourable, he gave immediate notice

notice of their situation to the British general, who detached a party of horse to seize and bring them into Philadelphia. During this interval too, between the dispersion of one corps of militia, and the collection of another, the country north of the Schuylkill was only guarded by a few horsemen under Major Jamieson, who could not possibly prevent the intercourse of the people with the town. It was perceived that the mills in the neighbourhood of German town were perpetually employed in manufacturing flour for the enemy, which the favourable dispositions of the people enabled them to receive, in spite of every means which could be used to prevent it. To put an end to this source of supply, General Washington was under the necessity of ordering the mills to be rendered unfit for use; and this service was executed by Major Jamieson.

At no period of the war had the American army been reduced to a situation of greater peril than during the winter at Valley-forge. It has been already stated that, more than once, they were absolutely without food. Even while their condition was less desperate in this respect, their stock of provisions was so scanty, that there was seldom at any time in the stores a quantity sufficient for the use of the troops for one week. Consequently, had the enemy moved out in force, the American army could not have continued in camp. The

want of provisions would have forced them out of it; and their deplorable condition with respect to clothes, disabled them from keeping the field in the winter. The returns of the first of February exhibit the astonishing number of three thousand nine hundred and eighty-nine men in camp unfit for duty for want of clothes: of this number scarcely a man had a pair of shoes. Even among those returned capable of doing duty, many were so badly clothed, that exposure to the colds of the season must have destroyed them. Although the total of the army exceeded seventeen thousand men, the present effective rank and file amounted to only five thousand and twelve. The returns throughout the winter do not essentially vary from that which has just been particularly stated.

While the sufferings of the soldiers, first during a winter campaign, and afterwards, in what were termed winter quarters, filled the hospitals, a dreadful mortality still continued to prevail in those miserable receptacles of the sick, where death was often found by those who entered them in quest of health. The provision made for them, which was at best inadequate to their wants, was said to be misapplied. They were crowded in small apartments, and a violent putrid fever raged among them, which carried off much greater numbers than all the diseases of the camp.

If then, during the deep snows which covered the

the earth for a great part of the winter, the enemy had taken the field, their own sufferings must indeed have been great, but the American loss must have been infinitely greater. General Washington must either have fought them with inferior numbers, and have staked the safety of his army on the issue of that battle, or have retreated further into the country, a measure which could not possibly have been effected without the loss of many of his naked and barefooted soldiers.

Happily the real condition of his army was not well understood by Sir William Howe, and that officer had ever been extremely careful of the lives and comfort of his own troops. He had on no occasion manifested a disposition to hazard them without a clear advantage, and perhaps his conduct was, in general, wise and able, as well as cautious. In this particular instance, however, a winter expedition would have infinitely distressed and injured the American army. Fortunately, Sir William Howe confined his operations to those small excursions that were calculated to enlarge the comforts of his own army, which, notwithstanding the good disposition of the neighbouring country, was much distressed for fuel, and often in great want of forage and fresh provisions. The vigilance used on the lines, especially on the south side of the Schuylkill, intercepted a great portion of the supplies designed for the Philadelphia mar-

ket; and corporal punishment was not unfrequently inflicted on those who were detected in attempting this infraction of the laws. As Captain Lee was extremely active, and always in the neighbourhood of the enemy, a plan was formed late in January, to surprise and capture both him and his troops in their quarters. A very extensive circuit was made by a large body of cavalry, and four of his patroles were seized without communicating the alarm. About break of day, the enemy appeared, and the few men of the troop who were in the house with their captain, were immediately posted at the doors and windows. Though his party was so small as not to furnish one man to each window, they behaved so gallantly as to drive off the assailants without losing a horse, or more than one person. Their quarter-master-sergeant, who was out of the house when the attack commenced, after being almost cut to pieces, was taken prisoner. The whole number in the house did not exceed ten.* That of the enemy was said to amount to two hundred. They lost a sergeant and three men, with several horses killed; and an officer and three men wounded. On the part of Captain Lee, except his patroles and quarter-master-sergeant, who were captured out

* Major Jamieson was accidentally present, and engaged in this skirmish.

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of the house, only Lieutenant Lindsay and one private were wounded.

The event of this skirmish gave great pleasure to the commander in chief. Throughout the late campaign, Lee had been eminently useful to him, and had given proofs of talents as a partisan, from which he had formed sanguine expectations for the future. He mentioned this affair in his orders with strong marks of approbation, and in a private letter to the captain, testified the satisfaction he felt at the honourable escape he had made from a stratagem which had so seriously threatened him.

For his merit through the preceding campaign, Congress promoted him to the rank of major, and gave him an independent partisan corps, to consist of two troops of horse; and by a subsequent resolution another troop was added to this corps.

While the defect in the public resources, arising from the alarming depreciation of the bills of credit, which were issued in great quantities, without being supported by taxes, manifested itself in all the military departments, a plan was matured in Congress, and in the board of war, without consulting the commander in chief, for a second irruption into Canada. It was proposed to place the Marquis de la Fayette at the head of this expedition; and to employ Generals Conway and Starke as the second in command.

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This young nobleman possessing an excellent heart, and all the enthusiasm of his country, had left France early in 1777, ostensibly in opposition to the will of his sovereign, to engage in the service of the United States. His high rank and supposed influence at the court of Versailles, soon secured him the unlimited respect of his countrymen in America; and, added to his frankness of manners, and zeal in their cause, recommended him very strongly to Congress. While the claims of others of the same country were so exorbitant, that they could not be gratified on the subject of rank, he demanded no station in the army, would consent to receive no compensation, and offered to serve as a volunteer. He had stipulated with Mr. Deane for the rank of major-general, without emolument; but on the current of ill fortune which set in late in 1776, he was advised not to embark. The honorary rank of major-general was conferred on him directly, but without any immediate command. In that capacity, he sought for danger, and was wounded at the battle of Brandywine. He attached himself with the ardour of youth to the commander in chief, who felt for him in turn a warm and sincere friendship, and paved the way to bestowing on him a command in the army equal to his rank.

Without any previous information that such an expedition was contemplated, General Washington received

received a letter from the president of the board of war, of the twenty-fourth of January, enclosing one of the same date to the marquis, requiring his immediate attendance on Congress, to receive his instructions. No other communication was made to the commander in chief, than to request that he would furnish Colonel Hazen's regiment, chiefly composed of Canadians, for the expedition; and in the same letter his advice and opinion were asked respecting it. The north was relied on for furnishing the force with which the plan was to be executed. Without noticing the manner in which this business was conducted, and the unusual want of confidence it betrayed, orders were given to Hazen's regiment to march towards Albany, and the marquis immediately proceeded to the residence of Congress. At his request, major-general the Baron de Kalb was added to the expedition; after which he repaired in person to Albany, in order to take charge of the troops who were to be there assembled, and from whence he was to cross the lakes on the ice, and to attack Montreal.

On his arrival at Albany, he found no preparations made for the expedition. Nothing which had been promised was in readiness. He therefore abandoned the enterprise as totally impracticable. Some time afterwards, Congress also determined on its relinquishment; and General Washington

was

was authorized to recall both the Marquis de la Fayette, and the Baron de Kalb.

While the army lay at Valley-forge, the Baron Stuben arrived in camp. This gentleman was a Prussian officer, very strongly recommended, who was said to have served many years in the armies of the great Frederick; to have been one of the aids-de-camp of that consummate commander, and to have held the rank of lieutenant-general. He was unquestionably well versed in the system of manœuvres which the King of Prussia had introduced, and was well qualified to teach them to raw troops. He claimed no rank, and only requested to render, as a volunteer, those services which might be in his power, and might be most useful to the American army. He had a conference with Congress, and from thence proceeded to Valley-forge.

The office of inspector-general had been previously bestowed on Conway; but he had never entered on its duties, and his promotion to the rank of major-general had given much umbrage to the brigadiers who had been his seniors. That circumstance, in addition to the knowledge of his being in a faction hostile to the commander in chief, rendered his situation in the army so uncomfortable, that he withdrew to York in Pennsylvania, which was the residence of Congress. That body had

had designed to employ him on the proposed expedition to Canada, but that being abandoned, he was not directed with Fayette and de Kalb to rejoin the army. Entertaining no hope of being called upon to execute the functions of his new office, he resigned his commission about the last of April, and some time afterwards returned to France.*

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* After his resignation, General Conway indulged himself frequently in expressions manifesting the hostility of his temper towards the commander in chief. These indiscretions were very ill received by the gentlemen of the army. He engaged in an altercation with General Cadwallader, which produced a duel, in which Conway received a wound, for some time believed to be mortal. While his recovery was despaired of, he addressed the following letter to General Washington:

SIR, *Philadelphia, 23d July*, 1778.

I FIND myself just able to hold the pen during a few minutes, and take this opportunity of expressing my sincere grief for having done, written, or said any thing disagreeable to your excellency. My career will soon be over; therefore justice and truth prompt me to declare my last sentiments. You are in my eyes the great and good man. May you long enjoy the love, veneration, and esteem of those states whose liberties you have asserted by your virtues.

I am, with the greatest respect,

Sir, your excellency's

most obedient humble servant.

THOMAS CONWAY.

It was at once supposed that the Baron Steuben must be peculiarly well fitted for this office, and he consented to engage in its duties as a volunteer. He performed them so much to the satisfaction of the commander in chief of the army, and of Congress, that, after the resignation of Conway, he was strongly recommended by General Washington to Congress, and by them appointed to the office, with the rank of major-general, without exciting the slightest murmur.

This gentleman was of real service to the American forces. He established one uniform system of manœuvres; and by his skill and persevering industry effected, during the continuance of the troops at Valley-forge, a most decisive and important improvement through all ranks of the army.

While in winter quarters, General Washington looked forward with extreme anxiety to the ensuing campaign. He counted on great advantages from being enabled to open it early, and in force; but his experience of the delays with which reinforcements were drawn to camp from the different states, led him to apprehend that, notwithstanding every exertion he could make, his army would be as heretofore, so feeble in the spring as to be exposed to the utmost danger, if early operations should be undertaken against it. In his letters to

Congress,

Congress, and to the state authorities, this apprehension was pressed with great force, and they were urged to furnish their quotas with the utmost expedition. "Sir William Howe," he observed, "could scarcely be supposed ignorant of the strength of the American army, and, if he was acquainted with it, would certainly open the campaign so soon as the weather would permit, unless restrained by the expectation of powerful reinforcements from Europe. In either event, it was of the utmost importance, immediately to place the army on a respectable footing, and prepare it for effectual offensive or defensive war. If the enemy should commence his operations early, it was essential to be able to meet him with a force competent to the protection of the country; if he should remain within his lines, in the expectation of large reinforcements, it was not less essential, to put the American army in a condition to act offensively, and with effect, before their arrival."

He urged likewise a timely provision of arms and accoutrements for the soldiers; and endeavoured, by calling the attention of the farmers generally to the article of provisions, to keep up a sufficient stock in the country, out of which supplies might be obtained.

He pressed too with great earnestness, "a completion

pletion of the proposed arrangements of the army, which was rendered necessary by the broken state of the regiments. He represented the alarming and distressing consequences which would result from being plungled into the campaign before the arrangements should be made, and the army properly organised. Whatever wisdom Congress, or their committees might use in the choice of officers, many would be disgusted, and would resign, or refuse the commissions offered to them. To remedy the confusion and disorder which this state of things would introduce, was not the work of a day. To establish order, regularity, and discipline, required the vigilance of every officer, and must in all armies flow from the generals."

However desirous Congress might be of carrying into execution every wish of their general, it was impossible to do so. Their own deliberations were unavoidably slow; and as the raising the requisite number of men could only be effected through the medium and agency of the state governments, no celerity in their own proceedings could have given dispatch to measures which, however immediate their necessity, were to be adopted by so many different popular assemblies, before they could be carried into execution.

The number of men expected was never raised, and the establishment of the army was not even

agreed

agreed on in Congress till about the last of May. The inactivity of the campaign of 1778 was such as to enable the general to effect, in the course of the summer, those arrangements respecting the officers which had been suggested early in the winter, and which ought immediately to have been entered on.

CHAPTER VI.

Congress forbid the embarkation of the British Troops taken at Saratoga—General Burgoyne permitted to depart—Plan of Reconciliation with America agreed to in Parliament—Communicated to, and rejected by, Congress—Resolutions of this Body thereupon—Information received of Treaties of Alliance and Commerce being entered into between France and the United States—The Difficulties which had existed in the Cabinet of Versailles on this Subject—Great Britain declares War against France—The Treaties with France ratified by Congress—Complaints made by General Washington of the Treatment of American Prisoners in Possession of the Enemy—Proceedings of Congress on this Subject—A partial Exchange of Prisoners agreed to.

BY the convention of Saratoga, it had been expressly stipulated, that Boston should be the place from whence the British army should embark for Europe. It was a circumstance then perhaps unknown to General Burgoyne, that as some time must elapse before a sufficient number of vessels for the transportation of his army over the Atlantic could be collected, the season of the year

year would arrive, when it would become extremely difficult for ships to make the port of Boston; in consequence of which, his embarkation would probably be deferred till the ensuing spring.

On receiving this unwelcome intelligence, he immediately applied to General Washington, to change the port of embarkation, and to substitute Newport in Rhode island, or some other place on the Sound, in lieu of Boston. If any considerations not foreseen should make this proposal objectionable, he then solicited that, both on account of his health and private business, that indulgence might be granted to himself and his suite.

This request being one on which the general did not think himself authorized to decide, it was immediately communicated to Congress in terms not unfavourable to the success of the application, so far as it respected General Burgoyne and his suite; but the objections to any change in the convention which might expedite the transportation of the army, were too weighty to be passed over. The difficulty of embarking them at Boston was considered as an advantage not to be relinquished. If the troops should be permitted to sail from the Sound, they would, on any reasonable computation, reach England in the early part of the winter, when, in conformity with the strictest principles of good faith, they might be employed on

garrison duty, and replaced in America by an equal number of other troops, who might reach the continent in time for the next campaign. The effect then of their surrender would only be to take them out of service, and to diminish so far the force of the enemy for the remnant of the campaign of 1777. But if the literal observance of the convention should be insisted on, it was not probable that they could be replaced during the campaign of 1778. The general pressed this subject on Congress; but his extreme solicitude induced him to address letters to General Gates, who was then at Albany, and to General Heath, who commanded at Boston, cautioning both those officers against any sudden assent they might inadvertently give to the proposal, if made to them also, which might possibly be considered as committing the faith of the United States.

This measure of precaution, so far as it respected Congress, was entirely unnecessary. That body was inattentive to no circumstance which respected the captured army. The facility with which the convention might be violated on the part of the enemy, and the arms of a large part of them again turned against America as soon as they could join General Howe, seems to have suggested itself to the American government so soon as the first rejoicings were over; and such was the then existing temper of the country, that the faith

faith and honour of the enemy were believed by many to be no sufficient securities against any injury they might possess the power of practising. Under this impression, a resolution had passed early in November, directing General Heath "to cause to be taken down the name and rank of every commissioned officer, and the name, former place of abode, occupation, size, age, and description of every non-commissioned officer and private soldier, and all other persons comprehended in the convention made between Lieutenant-general Burgoyne and Major-general Gates on the 16th of October, 1777; and to transmit an authentic copy thereof to the board of war, in order that if any officer, soldier, or other person of the said army, should hereafter be found in arms against these states in North America, during the present contest, he might be convicted of the offence, and suffer the punishment in such case inflicted by the law of nations."

Of the application made by General Burgoyne to Congress through the commander in chief, no other notice was taken than to pass a resolution, "that General Washington be directed to inform General Burgoyne, that Congress will not receive nor consider any proposition for indulgence, nor for altering the terms of the convention of Saratoga, unless immediately directed to their own body."

Contrary to every expectation, a fleet of transports was prepared, and reached Rhode island, on its way to Boston, in the month of December, for the purpose of receiving the British army at that place. But before its arrival, the suspicions preconceived by Congress had ripened into conviction, and the disposition to secure themselves against an apprehended breach of faith on the part of the enemy, had been confirmed by several circumstances in the conduct of General Burgoyne, and in the appearance of the fleet designed for the transportation of his army.

On arriving at Boston, the accommodations for his officers were supposed by him not to be such as were stipulated by the convention; in consequence of which, after a fruitless correspondence with General Heath, he had addressed a letter to General Gates, in which he complained of the very inconvenient quarters assigned his officers, as a breach of the articles of capitulation. This complaint was considered by Congress in a very serious point of view, since the assertion might very possibly have been made for the purpose of letting in the principle, that a breach of one of the articles on the part of the United States, had absolved the other party from the obligation which the other articles of the treaty imposed on him.

This suspicion was strengthened very much by the indiscreet hesitation of General Burgoyne to permit

permit the resolution of the 8th of November, requiring a descriptive list of his troops, to be executed. To this resolution it was supposed no just objection could be made, and therefore the opposition to it was ascribed to a determination already formed to adopt the line of conduct it was designed to guard against. Although the list was afterwards taken, this did not wipe away the suspicions which the objection to it had excited.

There were other circumstances which served very much to strengthen the impression already made. The number of transports was said to amount only to twenty-six, and these were supposed too few to convey an army of upwards of five thousand men to Europe; nor was it believed possible that Sir William Howe could, so soon, have laid in a sufficient stock of provisions for the voyage.

In addition to the objections to the embarkation of Burgoyne's army, founded on the fears really entertained concerning the use which would be made of them so soon as they should be out of the power of the United States, some trivial infractions of the convention were alleged to have been already committed, which, it was argued, gave to Congress a strict right to detain them. By the convention, the *arms* were to have been delivered up, and it appeared that several cartouch-boxes, and other military accoutrements supposed

to be comprehended in the technical term *arms*, had been detained. This was deemed an infraction of the letter of the compact, which, on rigid principle, authorized Congress to use those measures which were afterwards adopted.

The whole subject was referred to a committee, who reported at large the circumstances of the case, whereupon Congress came to the following resolutions:

"Resolved, that as many of the cartouch-boxes, and several other articles of military accoutrements, annexed to the persons of the non-commissioned officers and soldiers included in the convention of Saratoga, have not been delivered up, the convention on the part of the British army has not been strictly complied with.

"Resolved, that the refusal of Lieutenant-general Burgoyne to give descriptive lists of the non-commissioned officers and privates belonging to his army, subsequent to his declaration that the public faith was broken, is considered by Congress in an alarming point of view; since a compliance with the resolution of Congress could only have been prejudicial to that army, in case of an infraction of the convention on their part.

"Resolved, that the charge made by Lieutenant-general Burgoyne in his letter to Major-general Gates, of the 14th of November, of a breach of the public faith on the part of these states,

states, is not warranted by the just construction of any article of the convention of Saratoga; that it is a strong indication of his intention, and affords just ground of fear, that he will avail himself of such pretended breach of the convention, in order to disengage himself and the army under him from the obligation they are under to the United States; and that the security which these states have had in his personal honour is hereby destroyed.

"Resolved, therefore, that the embarkation of Lieutenant-general Burgoyne, and the troops under his command be suspended, till a distinct and explicit ratification of the convention of Saragota shall be properly notified by the court of Great Britain to Congress."

These resolutions, together with the report on which they were founded, were ordered to be transmitted to the several states, and to General Washington. Two copies of them were sent to General Heath, with directions to deliver one of them to General Burgoyne, and with further directions "to order the vessels which may have arrived, or which shall arrive, for the transportation of the army under Lieutenant-general Burgoyne, to quit without delay the port of Boston."

A requisition was also made on the government of Massachussett's bay, for an additional force to guard the British army during the continuance of

of the transports in port, and for so long a time after their departure, as the executive of that state should think necessary.

On receiving these resolutions, General Burgoyne addressed a letter to Congress, containing papers on which he grounded a defence of his conduct, and insisted on the embarkation of his army, conformably with the articles of the convention; but the committee to whom these papers were referred, reported their opinion, after the most attentive consideration of the letter and papers, to be, "that nothing therein contained was sufficient to induce Congress to recede from their resolves of the 8th of Januaay last, respecting the convention of Saratoga." At the same time that this application was made, the aid-de-camp of General Burgoyne was charged with another letter, in which, if the army should still be detained, he solicited permission for himself to embark at Rhode island, or some other place on the Sound, in consideration of his health, which greatly required his return to England. This request was readily acceded to. The letter, which has been already mentioned, was at the same time addressed to General Washington, expressing great respect for his character, and suggesting other considerations entirely personal for wishing to obtain the indulgence asked for. The ready compliance of Congress with his request, rendered unnecessary

unnecessary the interposition of General Washington; and his answer to Burgoyne is one of the many evidences of the sensibility with which a generous mind may contemplate the calamities of an enemy.

The surrender of the army under Burgoyne has been stated to have made a very strong impression on the British nation. This impression, notwithstanding the perseverance with which the king was disposed to prosecute the war, at length made its way into the cabinet, where a plan of pacification was determined on.

After the repetition of several motions on the part of the opposition, tending to the abandonment of the American war, Lord North gave notice in the house of commons, that he had digested a plan of reconciliation, which he designed shortly to lay before the house.

In conformity with this notice, he moved for leave to bring in, first, "a bill for removing all doubts and apprehensions concerning taxation by the parliament of Great Britain, in any of the colonies and plantations of North America." Secondly, "a bill to enable his majesty to appoint commissioners with sufficient powers to treat, conduct, and agree upon the means of quieting the disorders now subsisting in certain of the colonies of America."

The first contained a declaration, that "parliament

ment will impose no tax or duty whatever, payable within any of the colonies of North America, except only such duties as it may be expedient to impose for the purposes of commerce, the net produce of which should always be paid and applied to and for the use of the colonies in which the same shall be respectively levied, in like manner as other duties collected under the authority of their respective legislatures are ordinarily paid and applied."

The second authorized the appointment of commissioners by the cown, with power to treat either with the constituted authorities, or with individuals in America, provided that no stipulations which might be entered into, should have any effect till approved in parliament, other than as afterwards mentioned."

It is then enacted, " that the commissioners may have power to proclaim a cessation of hostilities in any of the colonies, to suspend the operation of the non-intercourse law, and further, to suspend, during the continuance of the act, so much of all or any of the acts of parliament which have passed since the tenth day of February 1763, as relates to the colonies."

" To grant pardon to any number or description of persons, and to appoint a governor in any colony in which his majesty had heretofore exercised the power of making such appointments."

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The duration of this latter act was limited to the 1st day of June, in the year 1779.

These bills passed both houses of parliament without any considerable opposition.

As intelligence was received by the minister, about the time of their being introduced, that a treaty had taken place between the United States and France, copies of them, after their first reading, and before they had gone through the requisite forms, were hurried to America, to be laid before Congress and the public, in the hope and expectation that they might counteract the effects which it was supposed the treaty with France would produce.

General Washington had very early intelligence of their arrival, and entertained very serious fears of their operation. The disaffected in many parts of the United States were already very numerous, and he was extremely apprehensive that the publication of any propositions which would restore peace, and that too on the terms originally required by America, would greatly increase their numbers. He feared that so many would be disposed to abandon the struggle for independence, and, for the sake of present ease and safety, to renew their ancient connection with Great Britain, modified according to the wishes of America previous to the war, as to increase very much the difficulties of continuing the contest, and to render its

its issue extremely doubtful. He immediately forwarded the bills to Congress in a letter, strongly expressive of his fears, and suggesting the policy of preventing by all possible means, and especially through the medium of the press, the malignant influence they were calculated to have on the public mind.

While uncertain of the truth of his intelligence on this subject, he received a letter from Major-general Tryon, the British governor of New York, dated the 17th of April, inclosing him a copy of the bills, and recommending that, through him, they might be made known to the officers and men under his command. This letter was accompanied with a certificate of the manner in which the bills came to his hands. This extraordinary certificate and letter, containing, to use the expression of the general himself, "the more extraordinary and impertinent request," that the contents should be, through him, communicated to the army, were immediately dispatched to Congress.

The first letter of General Washington, communicating the draughts of the bills which had been received out of Philadelphia, was taken up, and the subject acted on by Congress in the manner suggested by him. It was referred to a committee, consisting of Messrs. Morris, Drayton, and Dana, by whom a report was made, investigating the bills with great acuteness, as well as asperity, and

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in a manner well calculated to prevent the effect it had been apprehended they would have on the timid and undecided characters which abounded in many of the states. This report, which was unanimously approved and confirmed by Congress, concludes a very severe criticism on the bills, well adapted to the purpose for which it was made, in the following manner.

"From all which it appears evident to your committee, that the said bills are intended to operate upon the hopes and fears of the good people of these states, so as to create divisions among them, and a defection from the common cause, now, by the blessing of Divine Providence, drawing near to a favourable issue: that they are the sequel of that insidious plan, which, from the days of the stamp act down to the present time, hath involved this country in contention and bloodshed; and that, as in other cases, so in this, although circumstances may force them at times to recede from their unjustifiable claims, there can be no doubt, but they will, as heretofore, upon the first favourable occasion, again display that lust of domination which hath rent in twain the mighty empire of Britain.

"Upon the whole matter, the committee beg leave to report it as their opinion, that as the Americans united in this arduous contest upon principles

principles of common interest, for the defence of common rights and privileges, which union hath been cemented by common calamities, and by mutual good offices and affection, so the great cause for which they contend, and in which all mankind are interested, must derive its success from the continuance of that union; wherefore, any men, or body of men, who should presume to make any separate or partial convention or agreement with commissioners under the crown of Great Britain, or any of them, ought to be considered and treated as open and avowed enemies of these United States.

"And further, the committee beg leave to report it as their opinion, that these United States cannot with propriety hold any conference or treaty with any commissioners on the part of Great Britain, unless they shall, as a preliminary thereto, either withdraw their fleets and armies, or else, in positive and express terms, acknowledge the independence of the said states.

"And as much as it appears to be the design of the enemies of these states to lull them into a fatal security, to the end that they may act with a becoming weight and importance, it is the opinion of your committee, that the several states be called upon to use the most strenuous exertions to have their respective quotas of continental troops in

in the field as soon as possible, and that all the militia of the said states may be held in readiness to act as occasion may require."

This report, and the resolutions upon it, were ordered to be published. Such were the apprehensions yet entertained by many, of the ill effect which might be produced in America by proclaiming the opinion, that no negotiation ought to be entered into without the British troops should be previously withdrawn from America, or the acknowledgment of American independence, that a motion was made not to publish the paragraph containing that sentiment with the report. This proposition, however, was overruled by a great majority, and the whole was communicated to the public at the same time.

The succeeding day other resolutions were passed, recommending it to the different states to pardon, under such limitations as they might respectively think proper to make, such of their misguided citizens as had levied war against the United States.

This resolution was accompanied with an order, directing it to be printed in English and in German, and requesting General Washington to take such measures as he should deem most effectual for circulating the copies among the American levies in the enemies army.

This measure had been originally recommended

by the commander in chief, and the resolution requiring him to cause its circulation in the camp of the enemy, afforded a fair retort on Major-general Tryon. In a letter to that officer, acknowledging the receipt from him of that which enclosed the bills brought into parliament, he transmitted to him copies of the resolves just mentioned, with a request, that he would be instrumental in making them known to the persons on whom they were to operate.

During these transactions, the frigate La Sensible arrived with the important and interesting intelligence, that treaties of alliance and of commerce had been formed between the United States of America and France. This intelligence was brought over by Mr. Simeon Deane, the brother of the American minister at Paris, who, while on his way to Congress, communicated it to General Washington.

The joy which this event diffused throughout the United States may readily be conceived. It had long been anxiously expected, and the delays attending it had been such, as at length excited serious apprehensions that it would never take place.

France, naturally the rival of Britain, was yet extremely sore under the wounds inflicted during the war which terminated in 1763. It was impossible to reflect on a treaty which had wrested

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from her so fair a part of North America, without feeling resentments which would seek the first occasion of gratification.

The growing discontents between Great Britain and her colonies were consequently viewed at a distance with secret satisfaction; but rather as a circumstance which might have some tendency to weaken and embarrass a rival power, and which, from motives of general policy, was to be encouraged, than as one from which any definite and ascertained good was to be derived.

Indeed, the advantage most particularly contemplated from this quarrel, seems to have been security during its continuance, from any views which the restless temper and ambition attributed to the court of London might form for the disturbance of France.

That nation appears at that time to have required and wished for repose. The great exertions of the preceding disastrous war had so deranged its finances, that the wish to cultivate peace seems to have predominated in the cabinet. The young monarch, who had just ascended the throne, possessed a pacific, unambitious temper, by no means inclined to hazard his own dominions for the sake of harassing his neighbours, and the councils of France were guided by men alike indisposed to disturb the general tranquillity.

The jealousy then, and the resentment towards England which prevailed in the cabinet and the nation, were restrained from displaying themselves by a disinclination to encounter the financial embarrassments which had been produced by war, and which must be greatly increased by once more entering the lists, and measuring strength with that rival power.

In a memorial presented in 1774 by the Count de Vergennes to Louis XVI. soon after the commencement of his reign, in which that minister lays before his sovereign the probabilities of being able to maintain peace with the continental powers of Europe, he proceeds to say, "If after having taken a view of the continent, we turn our eyes to the ocean, do we perceive there greater motives for security? We see by our side an unquiet nation, more jealous of the prosperity of her neighbours than anxious for her own happiness; powerfully armed, and ready to strike the instant it may suit her to threaten. Let us not deceive ourselves with respect to her. Whatever parade the British ministers may make of their pacific dispositions, we cannot count on those dispositions longer than their domestic embarrassments may continue. These may cease. They may even increase to such a point, as to determine the government to give this restlessness of spirit a direction against external objects. It is not without example,

example, for the cry of war with France to be the signal of union to the parties which divide England."

In April 1776, a memorial was presented by the Count de Vergennes on the manner in which France and Spain ought to contemplate the consequences of the quarrel between Great Britain and her colonies. Several extracts from the reflections of Mr. Turgot on this memorial have been published, and serve to show the ideas then entertained by the cabinet of Versailles on this subject.

These reflections close with a recapitulation of the ideas contained in the body of the work, in which Mr. Turgot says, "In going over with Monsieur de Vergennes the various practicable modes in which the quarrel between England and her colonies may terminate, it has appeared to me, that the event the most desirable for the interest of the two crowns (France and Spain) would be, that England should conquer the resistance of her colonies, and force them to submit to her yoke. The reasons for this opinion are, if the colonies should only be subjugated by the ruin of all their resources, England would lose the advantage she has hitherto drawn from them during peace, by the increase of her commerce; and during war, by the use she has been able to make of their strength. If, on the contrary, the vanquished co-

lonies preserve their riches and their population, they will preserve their courage and their desire of independence, and will force England to employ a part of her forces to prevent another insurrection.

" The supposition of an absolute separation of the colonies from the mother country, appears to me infinitely probable. Whenever the independence of the colonies shall be complete, and shall be acknowledged by the English themselves, there will result from thence a total revolution in the political and commercial connection between Europe and America; and I believe firmly, that all the European powers will be compelled to abandon all empire over their colonies, to leave them an entire liberty of commerce with all nations, and to be content with partaking of that liberty in common with others, and preserving with their colonies the bonds of friendship and relationship.

" A reconciliation above all, and a speedy reconciliation between England and America, appears to me to be the only state of things in which the two crowns can have to appreheud immediate danger."

In the investigation of this danger, Mr. Turgot declares the opinion, that it may proceed either from England or from Spain.

With respect to England, he agrees with the Count de Vergennes, that the existing administration

tion had no hostile views; and he thinks further, that no minister would commence a war until he had consummated the work of pacification in America.

On the part of Spain it was to be apprehended, that her too great confidence in her strength, and her hate of England, might lead his Catholic Majesty into measures of hostility.

It was, therefore, equally important to guard against being surprised by England, or drawn too far by the ardour which might be supposed to exist in Spain.

Mr. Turgot then proceeds thus: "With respect to the measures which ought to be pursued by the two crowns, to prevent the danger which may threaten them, I think precisely with the Count de Vergennes, in the necessity of rejecting every plan of aggression on our part.

"First, for moral reasons, which are so conformable to the known opinion of the two monarchs.

"In the second place, on account of the condition in which the king has found his finances and his forces, both by land and sea, of the necessity of time to regenerate all those branches of his power, and of the danger of perpetuating our weakness by premature exertions of our strength.

"In the third place, for the decisive reason, that

an offensive war on our part would reconcile the mother country to her colonies, by giving to the minister a pretext for yielding, and to the colonies a motive for acceding to his propositions, in order to obtain time to consolidate themselves, to ripen their project, and to multiply their means."

He then treats of the idea of sending, without hostile views, a body of troops and a fleet into the French colonies, to put them into a state of defence, and to secure them against invasion.

This plan he rejects as ruinous, insufficient, and dangerous. Ruinous, because it would involve an expence which must last as long as their fears, and which might be more embarrassing to the department of finance than even war itself, because those extraordinary measures which war might justify, would not be authorized. Insufficient, because England would not undertake to attack the two crowns in America, without sending thither superior forces. And dangerous, because it would compel the English minister to send into America at least equal squadrons, and to prepare for war throughout the British dominions, a measure which would probably have the same effect with actual war in bringing about a reconciliation between the two parties, and thus provoking the danger which was sought to be avoided.

The memorial concludes with stating the necessity

sity of limiting themselves to measures of precaution less expensive, and approaching less to a state of hostility.

These were, " 1st. To watch attentively all those circumstances which might notify the approach of danger.

" In particular, to observe the sea coasts of the isles and the gulph of Mexico, and to procure frequent information of what was passing on the bank of Newfoundland.

" To observe in England the condition of their troops, and of their armaments, as well as the state of the public credit, and of that of the minister.

" To endeavour to be informed of what is passing in the English colonies, avoiding in the mean time every thing which might create an opinion, that we have there any direct and authorized agent.

" 2d. To facilitate to the colonists the means of procuring, in the way of commerce, the articles, and even the money, which they need, but without departing from neutrality, and without giving them direct succours.

" 3d. To re-establish without *éclat* our marine, to fill our magazines, repair our vessels, and put ourselves in a condition to fit out with dispatch, when it shall be necessary, a squadron at Toulon,

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and another at Brest, while Spain shall fit out one at Ferrol.

"4th. If we shall have just cause to fear still more imminent danger, actually to fit out the squadrons, but detain them in port."

But the advice with which this part of the subject closes is, "to participate nothing, unless the conduct of England should afford real cause to believe that she had determined to commence hostilities."

In another part of the same memorial, the deficit in the revenue is stated at twenty million of livres, and the military and marine establishments to be in a state of weakness which could scarcely be imagined. "Yet," continues Mr. Turgot, "our condition is not so desperate as to be unable to find resources to support a war, if one should be absolutely necessary, especially if there should be a probability of such success as might abridge its duration.

"But it must be confessed, that a war ought to be avoided as the greatest of all possible misfortunes, since it would render impracticable for a long time, perhaps for ever, a reform, absolutely necessary to the prosperity of the state, and to the ease of the people. By making a premature exertion of our strength, we shall risk the perpetuation of our weakness."

Such

Such was the advice given by his counsellors to the French monarch, and such was the system which, for a time, regulated the conduct of the cabinet of Versailles towards America.

It was deemed of the last importance to avoid a war with England, and to prevent a speedy reconciliation between Great Britain and the colonies, although it was thought most desirable that the contest, whenever it did end, should terminate in the subjugation of the latter.

Another party, however, was formed in the cabinet, to whose political system subsequent events at length gave the ascendancy. At the head of this party the queen is understood to have been placed. Its avowed object was to seize the present moment to revenge past injuries, humble the haughty rival of France, and dismember the empire of Britain.

Very early in the contest, the attention of America had been directed to foreign powers, and particularly to France. The absolute want of arms and ammunition, and the impossibility of obtaining an adequate supply of those articles by ordinary means, had induced the appointment, in 1775, of agents to procure military stores abroad, whose communications were with a secret committee empowered to correspond with their friends in Great Britain, Ireland, and other parts of the world.

Soon

Soon afterwards, Mr. Silas Deane was deputed to France, as a political and commercial agent. He arrived in Paris in the spring of 1776, with instructions to sound the dispositions of the cabinet on the existing controversy between Great Britain and her colonies, and to endeavour to obtain supplies of military stores.

The impression that a reconciliation between the mother country and her colonies would certainly take place, was carefully enforced by Lord Stormont, the British minister at the court of France, and produced real apprehensions that a settlement of differences between the two countries would be followed by serious consequences to their islands in the West Indies. Mr. Deane, aided by the countenance of the government, had obtained a sufficient quantity of military stores to load three vessels; but the apprehensions of an accommodation, and of the union of both countries against France, should she appear to have interfered in their quarrel, produced, notwithstanding the assurances of Mr. Deane that no accommodation would, or could take place, a suspension of the order for furnishing him with the military stores.

The declaration of independence had a very favourable influence on the affairs of America, by encouraging the court of Versailles privately to assist with the means of continuing the war; but the

the hope of being acknowledged and treated with as an independent power, was entirely disappointed.

In fact, the independence of America was not desired. In addition to this, it was foreseen that an acknowledgment of it would produce an immediate war with Britain, in which France was by no means willing at present to engage. In the mean time, however, by permitting the ships of America to enter her ports, and find protection in them, every facility was given to the obtaining of those supplies which were indispensably necessary to the prosecution of the war. It was stated to Mr. Deane, that an acknowledgment of the independence of America, unaccompanied with war, could be of no service, and that, if France should be compelled to make war on England, it would be much more just and honourable in the eyes of the world, to make it on some other account, and if made at all, it was the same thing to the United States of America. In one important view, it was better for them to have it originate from any other cause; as she would be under less important obligations.

Thus, France excused herself from taking any open part in the quarrel, but gave assurances, that the indulgences heretofore granted would be continued, and held out hopes that a rupture between the two countries was by no means improbable.

Before

Before the declaration of independence was made, so soon as Congress had come to a resolution in favour of it, a committee was appointed to prepare the plan of a treaty to be proposed to foreign powers, which, after a very long discussion, was at length agreed to, and ministers were appointed to negotiate the treaties proposed.

Mr. Franklin, Mr. Deane, and Mr. Jefferson were elected; but the last mentioned gentleman having declined accepting the appointment offered him, Mr. Arthur Lee, then in London, was chosen in his place.

These transactions were placed on the secret journals, and no member was permitted to give any specific information concerning them, or to state more than "that Congress had taken such steps as they judged necessary for obtaining foreign alliances." The secret committee were directed to make an effectual lodgment in France of ten thousand pounds sterling, subject to the order of these commissioners.

They assembled at Paris early in the winter, and had an immediate interview with the Count de Vergennes. It was perceived that the immense success of the American cruisers, whose captures had been so considerable as to raise the price of insurance higher than it had been at any time during the war with both France and Spain, had excited a very favourable opinion of the capacities

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and energies of the nation; that the ports of France would remain open to their ships, and that the American merchants might freely vend in them every article of commerce, and purshase whatever might be useful for their country; but that the minister was extremely cautious of giving umbrage to England, and was therefore desirous of avoiding their open reception, of acknowledging them, or entering into any formal negotiation with them, as the ministers from Congress. So exactly did the Count de Vergennes conform to the cautious system he had prescribed for himself, that, though the fact was well known to the ministers of the United States, that military stores to a considerable amount had been taken out of the king's magazines, in order to be exported to America; yet he affected, in their presence, to know nothing of this operation, and claimed no merit for his court on that account. He also intimated to them, that it would be well taken, if they would communicate with no other person about the court but himself, concerning their affairs.

Their applications for naval assistance, grounded on the advantages France and her colonies would derive from the independence of the United States, were positively rejected; but the rejection was accompanied with reasons tending to show, that the American cause would not be promoted by such aid.

In this state of the negotiation, the utmost circumspection was used with regard to England. Every step was taken publicly to gratify her. The remonstrances of her ambassador were scrupulously attended to; the departure of ships having military stores on board was forbidden, though they were afterwards privately permitted to sail, or sailed without permission; officers, who had leave of absence, and were about to join the American army, were recalled; strict orders were given that American prizes should not be sold in the ports of France; and, on some occasions, they went so far as to compel the cruisers to give up the ships they had captured, and brought into port, and to give security to return immediately to America, and cruise no more in the European seas. During these public demonstrations of dispositions favourable to England, it was intimated privately to the American ministers by persons about the court, that, though these measures were necessary for the present, they might be assured of the good-will of the French government: means were taken to facilitate the negotiations of loans to them; and the owners of American privateers, though forbidden to sell their prizes, or to have them condemned, found means privately to dispose of them, and turn them into money.*

* Ramsay.

Matters

Matters remained in this fluctuating state from December 1776, to December 1777. Privately encouraged, while publicly discountenanced, the prospects of the American ministers varied according to the complection of American affairs. A gentleman,* whose official situation gave him an opportunity to inspect all the communications of foreign ministers, observes, "that the defeat on Long island, the reduction of New York, and the train of disastrous events in 1776 which have already been mentioned, sunk the credit of the Americans very low, and abated much of the national ardour for their support. Their subsequent success at Trenton and Princeton effaced these impressions, and rekindled active zeal in their behalf. The capture of Burgoyne fixed these wavering politics. The success of the Americans in the campaign of 1777, placed them on high ground. Their enmity had proved itself formidable to Britain, and their friendship became desirable to France. Having helped themselves, they found it less difficult to obtain help from others. The same interest which hitherto had directed the court of France to a temporising policy, now required decisive conduct. Previous delay had favoured the

* Ramsay.

dismemberment of the empire,* but further procrastination bid fair to promote, at least such a federal alliance of the disjointed parts of the British empire, as would be no less hostile to the interests of France, than a reunion of its severed parts."

The news of the capitulation at Saratoga reached France very early in December 1777. The American deputies took that opportunity to press for an acceptance of the treaty which had been under consideration for the preceding twelve months. It was stated to be of the last importance at this juncture, when Britain would, most probably, make proposals for an accommodation, that Congress should know precisely what was to be expected from France and Spain.

They were informed by Mr. Girard, one of the secretaries of the king's council of state, that it was decided to acknowledge the independence of the United States, and to make a treaty with them. That in the treaty, no advantage would be taken of their situation to obtain terms, which, otherwise, it would not be convenient for them to agree to. That his Most Christian Majesty desired the treaty once made should be durable, and their

* This sentiment of Mr. R. we do not adopt. The delay did not, it is believed, favour the dismemberment, whatever might have been its object.

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amity to subsist for ever, which could not be expected, if each nation did not find an interest in its continuance, as well as in its commencement. It was therefore intended that the terms of the treaty should be such, as the new-formed states would be willing to agree to, if they had been long since established, and in the fullness of strength and power; and such as they should approve of, when that time should come.

That his Most Christian Majesty was fixed in his determination, not only to acknowledge, but to support their independence. That in doing this, he might probably soon be engaged in a war; yet he should not expect any compensation from the United States on that account; nor was it pretended that he acted wholly for their sakes; since, besides his real good-will to them, it was manifestly the interest of France, that the power of England should be diminished by the separation of the colonies from its government. The only condition he should require, and rely on, would be, that the United States, in no peace to be made, should give up their independence, and return to their obedience to the British government.

On determining to act decisively, a courier had been immediately dispatched to the court of Madrid, with information of the line of conduct about to be pursued by France. On his return, the negotiation was taken up in earnest, and a

treaty of friendship and commerce was soon concluded, the terms of which, though not so advantageous as the wishes of America would have suggested, were by no means contradictory to the disposition of the king, as disclosed to the American ministers by the Sieur Girard, and certainly, did not claim concessions which the actual situation of the United States might have induced them to make.*

This treaty, which considers America as an independent nation, contains no stipulation, engaging France to furnish any aids during the present war; but it was not difficult to foresee that, on being made public, it would be highly resented by England, who might either directly and openly attack France, or capture all the ships of that nation carrying on commerce with the United States. It was therefore accompanied by a treaty of alliance eventual and defensive between the two na-

* While the ministers were soliciting the court of France to enter into a treaty with them, Mr. Lee set out for Vienna and Berlin, in order to enter into negotiations with those powers. He found them wishing success to America, but determined not to engage in her quarrel. One point, however, was gained. He was assured that no new supplies of auxiliary troops would be furnished in Germany, and that the princes of the empire would do no more than treaties already made bound them to perform. The American ministers were also assured, that no auxiliaries would be granted by Russia or Denmark.

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tions, in which it was declared that if war should break out between France and England during the existence of that with the United States, it should be made a common cause, and that neither of the contracting parties should conclude either truce, or peace, with Great Britain, without the formal consent of the other, first obtained: and they mutually engaged "not to lay down their arms until the independence of the United States shall have been formally or tacitly assured by the treaty or treaties that shall terminate the war."

Further, the two parties reciprocally guaranteed for ever, the United States to his Most Christian Majesty, the present possessions of the crown of France in America, as well as those which it may acquire by the future treaty of peace; and his Most Christian Majesty, on his part, guaranteed to the United States, their liberty, sovereignty, and independence, absolute and unlimited, as well in matters of government as of commerce.

It was further declared, that in case of a rupture between France and England, this reciprocal guarantee should have its full force and effect, the moment such war should break out; and if such rupture should not take place, the mutual obligations of the said guarantee should not commence until the moment of the cessation of the present war between the United States and England shall have ascertained their possessions.

It was the wish of the ministers of the United States to engage France immediately in the war; and to make the alliance, not eventual, but positive. This proposition was however rejected.

In a few weeks after the negotiations were concluded, the * Marquis de Noailles officially announced to the court of London, the treaty of friendship and commerce France had formed with the United States. He accompanied his communication with assurances, that the contracting parties had paid great attention not to stipulate any exclusive advantages in favour of the French nation, and that the United States had reserved the liberty of treating with every nation whatever, on the same footing of equality and reciprocity.

The English government appeared determined to consider this notification as a declaration of war, and immediately published a memorial, for the purpose of justifying to all Europe the hostilities she had resolved to commence.

Not long after their commencement, private intelligence was received by the Count de Vergennes, that it was contemplated in the cabinet of London, to offer to the United States an acknowledgment of their independence, on condition of their making a separate peace. He immediately communicated this intelligence to the American

* Belsham.

ministers,

ministers, requesting them to lose no time in representing to Congress, that though war was not declared in form, it had commenced in fact, and he considered the obligations of the treaty of alliance as in full force; consequently, that neither party was now at liberty to make a separate peace. Instructions of a similar import were given to the minister representing the king of France in the United States.

The dispatches containing these treaties were received by the president, on Saturday the 2d of May, after Congress had adjourned. That body was immediately convened, the dispatches were opened, and their joyful contents communicated.

On Monday the treaties were ratified by an unanimous vote; and a resolution also passed without a dissenting voice, expressive of the high sense entertained by Congress of the magnanimity and wisdom of his Most Christian Majesty, as manifested by the treaties, and directing their ministers to present to him their grateful acknowledgments for his truly magnanimous conduct, and to assure him of their wishes, that the friendship so happily commenced between France and the United States might be perpetual.

In the exultation of the moment, and to spread as far as possible the joy it had produced, the treaty of alliance, as well as that of commerce and friend-

hip, was published; a circumstance which, not without cause, was disapproved of by the cabinet of Versailles; because that treaty being only eventual, ought not to have been communicated to the public but by mutual consent.

From this event, which was in America a source of almost universal exultation, it is necessary to direct the attention to one which was productive of very different sensations.

Among the various improvements which struggling humanity has gradually ingrafted on the code of laws which regulate the practice of civilized nations engaged in war, none have contributed more to diminish its calamities, than those which ameliorate the condition of prisoners. No obligations will be more respected by the generous and the brave; nor are there any, the violation of which could wound more deeply the national character, or expose it to more lasting or better-merited reproach.

In wars between nations nearly equal in power, and possessing rights acknowledged to be equal, a departure from modern usage in this respect is almost unheard of; and the voice of the civilised world would be raised against the potentate, which could adopt a system calculated to re-establish the rigours and misery of exploded barbarism. But in contests between different parts of the same empire, those practices, which mitigate

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the horrors of war, and diminish the sufferings of the wretched, not unfrequently yield to the blind miscalculations of erring resentment.

Those who go to war in support of the ancient and established state of things, often treat resistance as rebellion; and rather think their captives traitors, whose lives are forfeited to the offended laws of their country, than prisoners, whom fortune has thrown into their power. Those, on the contrary, who support by the sword principles they believe to be right, will admit of no departure from established usage to their prejudice, and may be expected, if they possess the power, to endeavour, by retaliating the injuries inflicted on them, to compel the observance of a more just and humane system. But they deduct from the fault imputable to their adversaries, by manifesting a disposition to punish those they deem traitors to themselves, with the same severity which they so loudly and justly complain of, when they are themselves its victims.

In the war between Great Britain and America, although neither Lord nor Sir William Howe appear, from their general conduct or sentiments, to have possessed that ferocity of temper, or that furious and bigoted zeal which could induce them to increase wantonly the miseries of the wretched, or to dispense, in the case of American prisoners, with an observance of the acknowledged rights of humanity;

humanity; yet there were facts which seem authentic, and certainly the belief of them was universal in the United States, which justified the opinion that, at least some of the subordinate depositaries of authority could bury all the milder feelings which belong to a man, and delight to increase the sufferings of those who were wretched and were in their power. On the other hand, some disposition was certainly discovered in several of the states, to discriminate the American loyalist who was deemed a traitor to his country, from the British soldier, when taken in arms.

The sufferings occasioned by these dispositions were unfortunately protracted to an unusual length, by circumstances in which it is possible, that each party might suppose the whole blame to rest with his adversary.

It has been already stated, that the execution of the agreement very early made between the two generals, for a fair and equal exchange of prisoners, was suspended by a difference of opinion between them, concerning the rights accruing to the British general, from the liberation in the winter of 1776-77 of many Americans taken before that time, a large proportion of whom were, when liberated, in the grasp of death. Sir William Howe insisted that every man of them should be accounted for, while General Washington contended that reasonable deductions should be made for

for those actually dead of diseases, under which they laboured when permitted to leave the British prisons.

This claim Sir William Howe persisted to make, and until it should be acceded to, he rejected absolutely any partial exchange whatever. General Washington was, on his part, immoveable in his determination to repel it; and thus all hope of being relieved in the ordinary mode appeared to be taken away from those whom the fortune of war had placed in the power of the enemy.

To a letter offering to exchange Major-general Prescott for Major-general Lee, Sir William Howe answered, that when the soldiers of his army, who were still prisoners, should be returned for those already sent in by him, he would consent to the proposition.*

* On being again applied to by General Washington, either to exchange the prisoners then in possession of each, without regard to the former differences of opinion between them; or, if that should not be acceded to, to permit the officers on both sides to return on parole to their friends, a proposition he was induced to make, because the latter part of the alternative was understood to have been desired by General Howe, he still persisted in his refusal to make any exchange, until General Washington should, as a preliminary, restore soldiers to the entire amount of those who had been liberated by him under the circumstances already noticed. But he consented to a mutual discharge of the officers on parole.

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In the mean time the sufferings of the American prisoners increased with the increasing severity of the season. By their country they had not been sufficiently furnished with clothes and blankets, and they were by no means properly supplied with fuel. These were not their only wants. Information, appearing to be authentic, was continually received, that they suffered almost the extremity of famine. Repeated remonstrances made on this subject to the British general, were answered by a denial of the fact.* He continued to

* The testimony, however, contradicting these assertions, was such that it could not be passed over, and General Washington, after stating in strong terms the injuries alleged to have been sustained, proceeded to add, "the friends of these unhappy men call daily upon me for their relief, and the people at large insist on retaliating upon those in our possession. Justice too demands it. However, before I could proceed to a measure at which my feelings recoil, I thought it right to mention the facts to you, and I would propose that I may be allowed to send a suitable person into the city, under the usual restrictions, to examine into the truth of them."

After remonstrating against the useless injuries to which the officers also were said to be exposed, the letter concludes with appealing to General Howe for the redress of these wrongs; and calling on him to recollect that any hardships which the prisoners in the hands of the Americans might suffer, would be attributable to himself.

This letter not being immediately attended to, another was written, calling for an answer to it; declaring that the sufferings

aver, that the same food, both in quantity and quality, was issued to the prisoners as to British troops when in transports or elsewhere, not on actual duty, and that every tenderness was experienced by them, which was compatible with the situation of his army. He yielded to the request made by General Washington to permit a commissary to visit the gaols, and demanded passports for a similar character to administer to the wants of British prisoners.

Mr. Boudinot, the American commissary of prisoners, was appointed by General Washington to visit the gaols in Philadelphia, in which they were confined; but on meeting Mr. Ferguson, the British commissary, he was informed, that General Howe thought it unnecessary for him to come into the city, as he would himself inspect the situation and treatment of the prisoners. There is reason

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ings of the prisoners demanded immediate redress, and that unless the most satisfactory assurances on this head should be given, duty would constrain him to retaliate instantly on the prisoners in his possession.

In answer to this letter, General Howe repeated the most explicit assertions on the subject of his orders respecting the treatment of prisoners, and gave his consent to their being visited by a person to be sent in for that purpose, and required in turn that passports should be sent for commissaries, who should also be permitted to visit, and supply the wants of British prisoners in possession of the Americans.

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to believe, that the causes of complaint, so far as respected provisions, did not afterwards exist in the same degree as formerly; and that the strong subsequent measures taken by Congress were founded on facts of an earlier date.

But clothes and blankets were also necessary during the winter, and the difficulty of furnishing them was very considerable. General Howe would not permit them to be purchased in Philadelphia, and they were not attainable in the country.

To compel him to abandon this distressing restriction, and to permit the use of paper money within the British lines, Congress at first resolved, that, no prisoner should be exchanged until all the expenditures made in paper for the supplies they received from the United States, should be repaid in specie, at the rate of four shillings and sixpence sterling for each dollar; and afterwards, that from the 1st day of February, no British commissary should be permitted to purchase any provision for the use of prisoners, west of New Jersey, but that all supplies for persons of that description should be furnished by the enemy from their own stores. This instruction was communicated to Sir William Howe on the 10th of January, who remonstrated against it with great strength and justice, as being a decree which doomed a considerable number of prisoners, far removed into the

the country, to a slow and painful death by famine, since it was absolutely impracticable to supply them immediately from Philadelphia. The severity of this order was in some degree mitigated by a resolution, that each British commissary of prisoners should receive from the American commissary of purchases, provisions to be paid for in specie, according to the resolution of the 19th of December, 1777, that is, at the rate of four shillings and sixpence sterling for every continental dollar expended in the purchase.

The board of war, at the time this resolution was entered into, made a report to Congress, stating at great length the various causes of complaint respecting the treatment received by the American prisoners, and the impediments with which the British general obstructed their being supplied with necessary food and clothing, which produced other strong resolutions, and among them one for retaliating precisely the sufferings and hardships they might sustain.

About the same time an order was hastily given by the board of war, which produced no inconsiderable degree of embarrassment, and exposed the commander in chief, in turn, to strictures not less severe than those he had applied to the British general with respect to American prisoners.

General Washington had consented, that a quartermaster, with a small escort, should come out of Philadelphia,

Philadelphia, with clothes and other comforts for the officers and soldiers of the enemy, who were prisoners. He had expressly stipulated for their security, and had given them a passport.

While they were travelling through the country, information was given to the board of war, that General Howe had refused to permit provisions to be sent in to the American prisoners in Philadelphia by water. This information was not correct. General Howe had only requested that flags should not be sent up or down the river, without previous permission obtained from himself. On this information, however, the board issued orders, on the 26th of January, to Lieutenant-colonel Smith immediately to seize on the persons of the officers protected by the passport of General Washington, on their horses, carriages, and the clothing destined for the relief of the British prisoners; and to secure them till further orders, either from the board, or from the commander in chief.

On hearing this circumstance, General Washington dispatched one of his aids-de-camp with orders for the immediate release of the persons and property which had been confined; but the officers refused to proceed on their journey, and returned to Philadelphia.*

* They alleged that their horses had been disabled, and the clothing embezzled.

This untoward event was very much regretted by the commander in chief, whose letters to the board of war, and to Congress, pointed out the ill consequences to be apprehended from it. In a letter received some time afterwards from General Howe, expressing his willingness that the American prisoners should be visited by deputy commissaries, who should inspect their situation, and supply their wants, he required, as the condition on which this indulgence should be granted, "that a similar permit should be allowed to persons appointed by him, which should be accompanied with the assurance of General Washington, that his authority will have sufficient weight to prevent any interruption to their progress, and any insult to their persons."

The demand of this assurance he stated to be rendered necessary by the conduct observed to those who had set out under his passport with clothing and other necessaries for the British and Hessian prisoners.

The situation of the American prisoners excited a great degree of sensibility throughout the United States. Their sufferings, whether occasioned in the first instance by neglecting to execute the orders of General Howe, by the savage temper of the person to whom they were consigned (as was extensively believed), or by the absolute inability of Congress to furnish clothing

and blankets, were certainly such as should have excited the humanity of all, and which peculiarly affected General Washington, who, at all times, and in all situations, took a deep interest in the fortunes of his soldiers.

He lamented, as a calamity of the greatest magnitude, the impediment to the exchange of prisoners, which had hitherto appeared to be insuperable, and had made repeated but ineffectual efforts to remove it. General Howe had uniformly refused to proceed with any cartel, unless his right to claim an exchange for all the diseased and infirm he had liberated, should be previously admitted.

At length, when all hope of prevailing on him to recede from that high ground was abandoned, he suddenly relinquished it of himself. He consented to an exchange of the prisoners actually on hand, and acceded completely to the proposition of General Washington for the meeting of commissaries, in order to ascertain equitably the number to which he should be entitled for those he had discharged in the preceding winter. To this proposition, which had repeatedly been made by General Washington himself, he of course assented with alacrity, and commissaries were mutually appointed, who were to meet on the 10th of March in German town, to adjust the subject referred to them. In the mean time, measures were

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taken to march the British prisoners towards the places at which they should be delivered.

This agreement General Washington conceived himself fully authorized to enter into, by the various resolutions Congress had passed on the subject. He had, however, the extreme mortification to perceive in a newspaper of the 4th of March, just before the time appointed for the meeting of the commissioners in German town, a resolution of Congress, calling on the several states for the accounts of supplies furnished the prisoners, that they might be adjusted according to the resolution of the 19th of December, before the exchange should take place.

This resolution rendered it indispensably necessary to postpone to a later day the meeting which had been agreed on. A letter was therefore addressed to Sir William Howe, informing him, that particular circumstances had rendered it inconvenient for the American commissioners to attend at the time appointed, and requesting that their meeting might be deferred from the 10th to the 31st of March.* The interval was successfully

* Sir William was probably not unacquainted with the cause of this delay; but he seemed disposed to avail himself of it, perhaps to manifest his unfavourable sentiments of Congress.

employed in obtaining from Congress a repeal of the resolution complained of.

It would seem probable that the dispositions of Congress on the subject of an exchange, did not correspond with those of General Washington. From the fundamental principles of the military establishments of the United States in the commencement of the war, an exchange of prisoners would at all times strengthen the army of the enemy much more than that of the Americans. The war having been carried on by troops engaged for short terms, aided by militia, the American prisoners when exchanged returned to their homes as citizens, while those of the enemy again took the field. An addition of numbers was therefore made to the hostile army, while no corresponding addition was made to their own.

It is not improbable that this consideration had its due influence in procuring the resolutions already mentioned, which were completely subversive in fact, though not in form, of the cartel agreed on by the two commanders in chief.

General Washington, who was governed by a policy more just, and more permanently beneficial, addressed himself very seriously to Congress as well on the injury done the public faith, and his own personal honour, by this infraction of a solemn engagement, as on the cruelty and impolicy

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of adopting a system which must for ever cut off all hopes of an exchange, and render imprisonment as lasting as the war. He represented in strong terms the effect such a measure must have on the troops on whom they should hereafter be compelled in a great degree to rely, and its impression on the friends and relations of those who were already in captivity. These remonstrances had the desired effect; and the resolutions complained of were repealed. The commissioners met according to the second appointment; but on examining their powers, it appeared that those given by General Washington were expressed to be in virtue of the authority vested in him; while those given by General Sir William Howe contained no such declaration.

This omission was objected to on the part of the United States; but General Howe refused to correct it, alleging that he designed the treaty to be of a personal nature, founded on the mutual confidence and honour of the contracting generals, and had no intention either of binding his nation, or of extending the cartel beyond the limits and duration of his own command.

This explanation was totally unsatisfactory to the American commissioners, who objected altogether to a treaty dependent on the personal faith of the generals, as being unequal and ineffectual: unequal, because by the terms in which their

powers were expressed, the faith of the United States was pledged for the observance of the stipulations they might enter into, while the British government would remain unbound; and ineffectual, because the object was not only to settle past differences, and effect a present exchange of prisoners, but also to establish principles which should govern in future, and which would include matters of very interesting civil concern, as well as those of a military nature.

General Howe persisting in his refusal to make the alteration in his powers which had been required, the negotiation broke off, and this fair prospect of terminating the distresses of a great number of unfortunate persons, passed away without effecting the good it had promised.

Some time after the failure of the negotiation relative to a general cartel, Sir William Howe proposed that all prisoners actually exchangeable should be sent in to the nearest posts, and returns made of officer for officer of equal rank, and soldier for soldier, as far as numbers would admit; and that if a surplus of officers should remain, they should be exchanged for an equivalent in privates.

On the representations of General Washington, Congress acceded substantially to this proposition, so far as related to the exchange of officer for officer, and soldier for soldier, but rejected the part

which

which admitted an equivalent in privates for a surplus of officers, because the officers captured with Burgoyne were exchangeable within the powers of General Howe. Under this agreement, an exchange took place to a considerable extent: but as the Americans had lost many more prisoners than they had taken, unless the army of Burgoyne should be brought into computation, numbers unexchanged were still to be detained in captivity.

CHAPTER VIII.

General Lacy surprised—General Howe resigns his Command and returns to England, and is succeeded by Sir H. Clinton—The British Army evacuate Philadelphia, and march through the Jerseys—Council of War called by General Washington, decide against attacking the Enemy on their March—The Opinion of the General against this Decision—He attacks the Enemy at Monmouth Court-house—The Action severe, but not decisive—General Lee arrested for his Behaviour in this Action, and afterwards to the Commander in Chief—Court-martial appointed to try him—Sentenced to be suspended from his Command for one Year—The Thanks of Congress presented to General Washington and his Army for their Conduct in the Battle at Monmouth.

THE position at Valley-forge had been taken by the American army for the purposes of covering the country of Pennsylvania, protecting the magazines laid up in it, and cutting off those supplies to the British in Philadelphia which would be of great utility to them, and with which very many of the people were well disposed to furnish them. It was impossible, without a vast increase of force, to station troops in sufficient numbers on both

both sides of the Delaware and the Schuylkill, to repel large parties which it was easy for the enemy to detach; and of course this formed no part of the system of the operations laid down for the winter. The plan extended no further than to guard, with the militia of Pennsylvania, the north of the Schuylkill, and with the militia of New Jersey, the east of the Delaware, so as to restrain the people of the country from carrying in their provisions to a market to which they were irresistibly allured by receiving payment in specie.

These light irregular parties, it was hoped, would not only restrain and check an intercourse which, though beneficial to individuals, was deemed highly pernicious in a national point of view, but would be sufficient to repel small foraging parties; and consequently would render it necessary for the enemy to come out in force, or to want those important supplies which they depended on collecting in the adjacent country.

On such occasions the operation could not be suddenly completed, and, it was expected, might often be defeated by small detachments of continental troops from the army, to be reinforced by militia, who, it was supposed, would turn out with alacrity, and in greater numbers, to save themselves from being plundered. This hope was the rather indulged, because in the intervals between these incursions only small portions of the militia

militia were required to keep the field. On a great and pressing emergency, therefore, a greater exertion was expected.

In the species of war which this state of things introduced, the advantage was manifestly with the enemy, who, being unassailable in their quarters, and possessing the command of the Delaware, could at any time with great facility ravage the coast of Jersey to a considerable extent, before any assistance could be received from continental troops to be detached from the army. But of this advantage it was impossible to deprive them, unless two camps could have been formed, either of which would have been sufficiently strong to repel them; or, unless the militia would have assembled universally, at the first alarm, with arms in their hands, to drive back the invaders of their country.

This was not counted on. A much smaller degree of service was expected, and even this was not always performed. The lines were often so ill guarded, that the communication with Philadelphia experienced but little interruption.

Yet the wants of such a number of persons and horses required a greater supply of fresh provisions and forage than could be brought in by these means; and as the spring opened, several expeditions were undertaken, both to relieve the British army, and to distress that of the United States.

About

About the middle of March an expedition into Jersey, under Colonel Mawhood and Major Simcoe, with about twelve hundred men, was projected, and carried into execution. Having embarked at Philadelphia, and sailed down the river, they landed at Salem, nearly opposite Reedy island, and dispersed the small bodies of militia stationed in that part of the country, under Colonels Hand and Holme. The militia were posted at some bridges on Always creek, over which it was supposed the British would endeavour to force a passage. Their numbers being unequal to any effectual resistance, it was only intended by their commanding officers to keep the enemy in some check until they should be reinforced. A very judicious plan to surprise them was skilfully executed by Major Simcoe, one of the best partisans in the British service, and their guard was cut to pieces. The loss of the militia in these skirmishes, in killed and taken, was between fifty and sixty men.

General Washington had received early intelligence of this expedition, and had communicated it to Governor Livingston, with a request, that he would immediately order out the militia in force, to join Colonel Shreve, who was ordered to pass over into Jersey with his regiment, and with the assistance he would there receive, to take such a position as was best calculated to cover the country

try against which the expedition might be directed. It was uncertain whether the party intended to forage in the counties bordering on the Delaware, or to destroy the salt works on the sea coast. The governor could not bring his militia with sufficient expedition into the field. The legislature had neglected to make the necessary provision for paying them, and they required a continental force, as a point around which they might be encouraged to rally. The militia who had assembled about Haddonfield, to join Colonel Shreve, and to stop the communication with Philadelphia, were at his arrival less than one hundred; and Colonel Ellis, their commanding officer, remarked in a letter to the governor, (March 23d) that "without some standing force, little was to be expected from the militia, who being alone not sufficient to prevent the incursions of the enemy, each one naturally consults his own safety, by not being found in arms."

Mawhood of course was unrestrained, and the devastation of his party was believed to have been wantonly distressing. Its course of destruction was preceded by a summons to Colonel Hand, the commanding officer of the militia, to lay down his arms, which was accompanied with a threat of the consequences to result from his refusal. This threat was too faithfully executed.

Mawhood completed his forage unmolestedly, and

and returned to Philadelphia. During the continuance of this incursion, which lasted six or seven days, not more than two hundred men could be collected to reinforce Colonel Shreve, who was consequently unable to effect any thing, and did not even march to the lower parts of Jersey, which were plundered without restraint.*

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* The following petition addressed to Governor Livingston will furnish some evidence of the situation to which that part of Jersey was reduced :—

To his excellency, William Livingston, esq. governor, captain-general, and commander in chief in and over the state of New Jersey, and the territories thereunto belonging in America, chancellor and ordinary in the same.

The humble petition of the officers, civil and military, whose names are hereunto subscribed,

Sheweth,

That a large detachment of the British army, a few weeks ago, made an invasion into the lower counties of this state on the Delaware, and plundered a few of the inhabitants. That at present a large detachment are invading them a second time. That the enemy in this second incursion have, by the express order of Colonel Mawhood, the commanding officer, bayoneted and butchered, in the most inhuman manner, as we have been credibly informed, a number of the militia, who have unfortunately fallen into their hands. That Colonel Mawhood, immediately after the massacre, in open letters sent to both officers and privates by a flag, had the effrontery to insult us with a demand, that we should lay down our arms, and if not, threatened to burn, destroy, and lay the whole country waste, and more especially the property of a number of our most distinguished men, whom he named. That, in one

The continual applications to General Washington for detachments of continental troops suffi-

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one instance, he has since put his threat in execution, by burning one of the finest dwelling houses in Salem county, and all the other buildings on the same farm, the property of Colonel Benjamin Home. That plunder, rapine, and devastation in the most fertile and populous parts of these counties, widely mark their footsteps wherever they go. That they are spreading disaffection, and are using every possible means to corrupt the minds of the people, who, within their lines, have so little virtue as to purchase from them.

That we are in no state of defence. That we are so exposed, by reason of our situation, that some of our officers, civil and military, have moved out of the counties for safety. That our militia during the last winter, have been so fatigued by repeated calls and continued service, and disaffection is now so widely diffused, that very few can be called out, in some places none. That we have no troops of light horse regularly embodied; there is a scarcity of small arms among us, and no field pieces. That in these two incursions we have very sensibly felt the want of field pieces and artillery men. That the number of us assembled is so small, that though we should use the greatest conduct and bravery, we could only provoke, but not injure our enemy.

That the extent of our country is so great, and our small number of men so fatigued, indifferently armed, and without field pieces, that they cannot defend it. That as the Delaware runs all along those counties, we are liable to be attacked in numberless places.

That the acquisition of these counties would be of great advantage to the enemy. That they could nearly maintain their whole army a campaign by the plunder, forage, and assistance they could draw from them. That although the

United

cient to cover the country, were necessarily rejected. It was not recollected by the applicants, that the enemy could reinforce with more facility than the American general, and could consequently keep up their superiority till the whole war should be transferred to Jersey. He, however, permitted Colonel Shreve to remain on the east side of the Delaware, and reinforced him with an additional regiment. He would not consent to add to the

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United States might not need them, yet it might perhaps be advisable to defend them, to prevent the advantage the enemy might receive from them. That our riches and former virtue make us a prey to an enemy whose tender mercies are cruelties.

That, in short, our situation is beyond description deplorable. That the powers, civil and military, are daily relaxing, and disaffection prevailing. That we can neither stay at our houses, go out, nor come in, with safety. That we can neither plough, plant, sow, reap, nor gather. That we are fast falling into poverty, distress, and into the hands of our enemy. That unless there can be sent to our relief and assistance a sufficient body of standing troops, we must be under the disagreeable necessity of leaving the country to the enemy, and removing ourselves and families to distant places for safety. That although the present detachment may be fled and gone before the relief reaches us, yet a body of troops are necessary for our protection, as long as the enemy possess Philadelphia. And these are the sentiments, not only of us the subscribers, but of all the rest of the officers, civil and military, and other the good subjects of this state in these counties.

strength

strength of this detachment, or to depart from his fixed plan, which was only to keep on that side of the Delaware such a force as would break off the ordinary intercourse between the town and country. A larger force, he was entirely persuaded, would only direct the attention of Sir William Howe towards it, and induce him to form plans for its destruction. One of these, attempted to be executed on Colonel Shreve, was disappointed by a precipitate retreat, attended with some loss.

May 1st, not long after this incursion into Jersey, an enterprise was undertaken against General Lacy, who, with a small number of Pennsylvania militia, seldom amounting to six hundred, and sometimes not exceeding fifty, watched the roads leading to Philadelphia on the north side of the Schuylkill, and was generally posted within twenty miles of that town.

This expedition was entrusted to Colonel Abercrombie and Major Simcoe, who avoided all the posts Lacy had established for its security, and threw a body of troops in his rear before he discovered their approach. After a very short resistance he escaped, with the loss of a few men killed, and all his baggage. Had he been apprised that the enemy were advancing on him, he might have retired, and saved his baggage; but the force he possessed by no means enabled him to maintain his ground. The militia were entirely dispersed, and

General

General Lacy was soon afterwards relieved by General Potter, who, although he had rendered considerable service during the preceding campaign, and the early part of the winter, had made himself unacceptable both to the militia and inhabitants, by his endeavours to introduce discipline among the former, and by the severe corporal punishment he inflicted on the latter, when detected in attempting to violate the laws, by carrying supplies to the Philadelphia market.*

Congress had felt so severely the consequences resulting from the entire command of the water being possessed by the enemy, as to have made great exertions to gain an ascendancy on that element wherever it was practicable, and to avail themselves partially of the advantage of a naval force. For this purpose, they generally sunk impediments in the more navigable rivers, so as to obstruct the passage of the enemy up them, and constructed frigates and smaller vessels to be employed above those impediments, or elsewhere, as the occasion might require.

Several of these vessels, in addition to those engaged in the defence of fort Mifflin, had been commenced building above Philadelphia, but were not entirely completed when the enemy obtained

* This, however, did not deter him from resuming the practice when he resumed the command.

possession of the river. General Washington was extremely apprehensive for their safety, and feared, before the evacuation of forts Mifflin and Mercer, that the enemy would possess them, and use them to advantage against the first of those places, and against the small fleet which assisted in its defence. He had repeatedly expressed these apprehensions, and his desire that the frigates should be sunk in such a manner as to be weighed with difficulty, if an attempt to raise them should be made. The persons, however, entrusted by Congress with the superintendance of them, supposed it would be equally secure to put plugs in different parts of them, which might be drawn out on the approach of the enemy, and the vessels sunk before they could be removed or destroyed.

Against these vessels, and some stores collected at Borden town, an expedition was planned, which ended in their entire destruction. General Dickinson was in the neighbourhood, but his force was too small to interrupt the execution of the design; and General Maxwell, who had been ordered out by the commander in chief on the first intelligence that the enemy were advancing up the Delaware, was retarded in his march by a heavy rain, which continued falling for several hours, but which did not obstruct the movement of the British detachment, which passed up the river in vessels prepared for the purpose.

To

To cover the country effectually on the north of the Schuylkill, and restrain as much as possible the parties detached in various directions from Philadelphia, who most generally effected their object, and returned before they could be opposed by the army lying at Valley-forge, to form an advanced guard for the security of the main army, and to be in readiness to annoy, if practicable, the rear of the enemy, should they evacuate Philadelphia, an event which a great variety of circumstances combined to prove was in contemplation, the Marquis de la Fayette was detached with rather more than two thousand picked troops, and a few pieces of cannon, to take post near the lines. As this corps formed a very valuable part of the army, the instructions of the general recommended the utmost attention to its safety, and particularly advised him to avoid any permanent station, since a long continuance in one position would enable the enemy to concert their measures successfully against him.

With this detachment the marquis crossed the Schuylkill, and took post at Baron hill, about eight or ten miles in front of the army at Valley-forge. Immediate notice of his arrival was given to Sir William Howe, who reconnoitred his position, and formed a plan to surprise and cut him off.

In execution of this plan, on the night of the

19th, General Grant, with five thousand select troops, took the road which leads up the Delaware, and consequently diverges from Baron hill. After marching along this road some distance, he inclined to the left, and passing by White-marsh, where several roads unite, took one leading to the position he was directed to occupy, something more than a mile in the rear of the marquis, between him and Valley-forge. He reached his point of destination about sunrise, entirely undiscovered. Here the roads fork, the one leading to the camp of La Fayette, and the other to Matson's ford, over the Schuylkill. In the course of the night, General Grey, with a strong detachment, had advanced along the south side of the Schuylkill, and taken post at a ford, two or three miles in front of the right flank of La Fayette, while the residue of the army encamped on Chesnut hill.

Thus perilous was the situation of the marquis when he first discovered the danger which threatened him. It was about the same time perceived from the camp at Valley-forge: alarm guns were fired to announce it to him, and the whole army was put under arms, to act as circumstances might require. Thus surrounded with danger, Fayette took with promptitude and decision the only course which could have preserved him. He put his troops instantly in motion, and passed over at Matson's

Matson's ford, which was rather nearer to General Grant than himself, without being intercepted by that officer, or sustaining a greater loss than nine men. Having crossed the river, and taken possession of the high grounds on the other side, he sent back a small party to bring over his field pieces, which were also secured.

General Grant, who had reached the ground lately occupied by Fayette, soon after it was abandoned, followed his rear, and appeared at the ford just after the Americans had crossed it; but finding them very advantageously posted, he did not choose to attack them, and the whole army returned to Philadelphia, having effected nothing.

General Grant did not escape censure, for having allowed the great advantage he had acquired in gaining the rear of the American encampment unperceived, to slip through his hands unused. He might, with the utmost certainty, have reached Matson's ford before the marquis, and have cut off the only retreat which remained for him. That officer would then have been compelled to have sought for safety by flying towards the Delaware. But Grant mistook the movements of his enemy, and persisting in the opinion that he was still in his encampment, kept the road leading to it, till it was too late to correct the error he had committed.*

* Stedman.

In the statement of this affair made by General la Fayette, he represents himself to have advanced the head of a column towards Grant, as if to attack him, while the rear filed off rapidly towards the Schuylkill. This movement gained ground even for the front, which, while it advanced towards the enemy, also approached the river, and at the same time induced General Grant to halt, in order to prepare for battle.

While this manœuvre was performing in the face of the detachment under Grant, a small party was thrown into the church-yard, which was surrounded by a wall on the road towards General Grey, which also gave the appearance of an intention to attack in that quarter. By these dispositions, happily conceived, and executed with regularity, the marquis extricated himself and his party from the destruction which had appeared almost inevitable. In his letter to Congress, General Washington termed it "a timely and handsome retreat;" and certainly the compliment was merited.

It would seem that the same degree of military talent was not discovered in guarding against the approach of danger, as in afterwards extricating himself from it. But the imputation which would generally attach to an officer who permits an enemy to pass in full force unobserved, within a short distance

distance of his flank, into his rear, is very much diminished, if not entirely removed, by a circumstance stated by La Fayette in his vindication. It is, that the Pennsylvania militia were posted on his left flank, and relied on to guard the roads about the White-marsh. Without his knowledge, they changed their position, and retired into the rear, thus leaving that important pass open to the enemy.

About this time, Sir William Howe, who had in the preceding autumn solicited his recall, resigned the command of the army into the hands of Sir Henry Clinton, and embarked for Great Britain.

Great doubts have been entertained whether the plan on which this gentleman conducted the war was well chosen. Many are of opinion, that more vigour and enterprise on the part of the British general would have entirely dispersed the American army, and have terminated the contest.

It is much easier to look back and condemn an unsuccessful system, than to select with discriminating judgment, before events shall have decided on their value, those measures which, under existing circumstances, are best adapted to the end proposed.

The American army was certainly, more than once, very critically circumstanced. Its difficul-

ties were at all times great, and its situation at some times extremely perilous. Sir William Howe might, on some occasions, have acted more efficiently, but in doing so, he would also have exposed himself to considerable loss and hazard. The effect of a single defeat might have been to raise the whole country in arms, and entirely to depress the friends of the royal cause. Such victories as that at Bunker's hill, or that claimed by Burgoyne on the 19th of September, would indeed have terminated the war, and terminated it by the ruin of his army.

His system seems to have been to put nothing to hazard. Whenever he marched through the country, he preserved such compact order, as never to expose any part of his troops to a vigilant enemy,* ready to strike where the occasion presented itself. He never fought without the fairest prospects of victory, and then relied much on stratagem to increase the advantage his numbers gave him, and diminish the loss with which even victory must be accompanied. By this circumspect, cautious system, he maintained to the last

* He departed from this system in the winter cantonment of his troops on the Delaware in 1776; but Washington was then supposed to be in a situation incapable of any offensive operation.

moment

moment of his command, a superiority of military force.*

He probably supposed, that the extreme difficulties under which America laboured; the failure of her funds by the regular and rapid depreciation of paper money; the annual dispersion of her army by the expiration of the terms of their enlistment; the uncommon privations to which every class of society was under the necessity of submitting, in consequence of the entire destruction of commerce, would of themselves create, in the public mind, a disposition to return to the ancient state of things, if the operation of these causes should not be counteracted by brilliant successes obtained over him, or the manifest inferiority of his army to that opposed to him.

Experience has certainly demonstrated the fallacy of this reasoning; but we have not the same evidence that an opposite course of conduct would have been more successful. A country situated like America is invincible, while the mind remains unsubdued.

Whatever opinion may be entertained of the general plan by which Sir William was regulated,

* For a very short time after the union of the northern army with that of the middle department, there appears to have been an equality of force, but the baneful system of short enlistments soon destroyed this equality.

it must be admitted that its particular parts were executed with judgment; and that, whenever he did act, a very considerable share of military skill was displayed. The officers he had commanded, testified, on his leaving the army, their sense of his services, by one of those splendid and triumphal processions which only an uninterrupted course of victory could be supposed to have occasioned.

About the time the command of the army devolved on Sir Henry Clinton, orders were received for the evacuation of Philadelphia. The part it was now evident France was about to take in the war, the naval force which had been prepared by that power before she declared herself, and which was now ready to act, rendered Philadelphia a position extremely dangerous, and determined the British ministry entirely to abandon the Delaware.

The preparations for this movement could not be made unobserved. The design was very soon penetrated by the commander in chief, and had constituted one motive for detaching the Marquis de la Fayette over the Schuylkill.

It was, however, not easy absolutely to determine the precise object or course of the enemy. The preparations making in Philadelphia were such as equally denoted an expedition to the south, an embarkation of the whole army for New York, or elsewhere, or an intention of marching

ing to that city through New Jersey. The latter was, in the opinion of the commander in chief, the plan contemplated; but those were not wanting, who were sanguine enough to hope that the war in the United States was no longer to be prosecuted.

In the mean time, every exertion was made by General Washington to strengthen his army. The detachments were called in, and the state governments pressed to expedite the march of their new levies.

Although this subject had been taken up immediately after going into winter quarters, and an army of forty thousand men agreed on for the campaign; although the strongest representations were made to the states of the importance of bringing their quotas into the field early in the spring, and of the dangers to which America had already been exposed from their delaying to furnish their recruits by the time the season would admit of action; yet such were the real difficulties to be encountered by the states in raising men, and such the waste of time unavoidable in a system where the essential powers of government were vested in so many distinct bodies, that the spring was far advanced before the ranks were strengthened by any new levies; and, in some instances, when the soldiers should have been in camp, the legislature

lature was yet deliberating on the means of raising them.

Sensible of the difficulty of recruiting infantry, as well as of the vast importance of a superiority in point of cavalry, and calculating on the patriotism of the young and the wealthy, if the means should be furnished them of serving their country in a character which would be compatible with their feelings, and with that pride of station which exists every where, it was earnestly recommended by Congress to the young gentlemen of property and spirit in the several states, to embody themselves into troops of cavalry, to serve without pay till the close of the year. Provisions were to be found for themselves and horses, and compensation to be made for any horses which might be lost in the service. This resolution did not produce the effect expected from it. The volunteers were few, and late in joining the army.

In the mean time, the preparations for the evacuation of Philadelphia were expedited as much as possible, and the opinion that it was intended to reach New York through the Jerseys, gained ground.

General Maxwell, with the Jersey brigade, was ordered over the Delaware to take post about mount Holly, and to join Major-general Dickinson, who was beginning to assemble the militia of that state,

state, for the purpose of co-operating with the continental troops, in breaking up the bridges, falling trees in the roads, and otherwise embarrassing the march of the enemy, should he attempt to reach New York by land. These troops were ordered to be careful not to expose themselves to a coup de main; and General Dickinson was advised to keep his militia in small light parties, hovering on the flanks of the enemy, so as to gall them on their march, without exhibiting an object of sufficient magnitude to induce any concerted plan against him.

A stronger detachment was requested, and General Gates, who now again commanded in the northern department, called earnestly for a reinforcement to enable him to guard the highlands on the Hudson: but the state of the army did not admit of such a division. The enemy had given out, that they designed a visit to Valley-forge before they took leave of Pennsylvania; and although this threat was not to be regarded while the army was kept entire, it was very probable that such a distribution of the troops as was solicited, would induce them to realise it. The determination, therefore, to keep the army in force, and in its present station, till Philadelphia should be absolutely evacuated, was rigidly adhered to; and while the means to that end were taking, magazines were laid up to support it in its march either

either to Fishkill, or towards the lower parts of the Hudson.

In this state of things, authentic intelligence was received on the 17th of June, that great part of the enemy had crossed the Delaware, and that the residue would undoubtedly very soon pass that river.

The opinion of all the general officers was required on the course now proper to be pursued. As it was an event which had been for some time expected, the subject had of course been maturely considered.

There were no advocates for an attempt to cut off the rear of the enemy while crossing the Delaware. All concurred in deeming it unadvisable to attempt entering the works about Philadelphia, until they should be entirely abandoned.

On the system to be pursued after crossing the Delaware, there was not so much unanimity. General Lee, who had lately been exchanged, and whose military experience gave great weight to his opinions, was vehement against risking either a general or partial engagement. According to the best estimate which could be formed of the strength of the British army, it was computed at ten thousand rank and file fit for duty: that of the Americans amounted to between ten and eleven thousand. General Lee was decisively of opinion that, with such an equality of force, it would

would "be criminal" to hazard an action. He relied much on the advantageous ground on which their late foreign connections had placed the United States, and strongly contended that only a defeat of their army could now endanger their independence. To this he said the army ought not to be exposed. It would be impossible, he thought, to bring on a partial action, without risking its being made general, if such should be the choice of the enemy; since the detachment which should engage must be supported, or be cut to pieces. A general action ought not to be fought, unless the advantage was manifestly with the American army. This at present was by no means the case. He attributed so much to the superiority of the enemy in point of discipline, as to be of opinion that the issue of the engagement would almost certainly be unfavourable.

General de Portail, a French officer of considerable military reputation, maintained the same opinions: and the Baron de Steuben also thought an action ought carefully to be avoided. The American officers seem to have been influenced by the councils of the Europeans, and of seventeen generals, only Wayne and Cadwallader were decidedly in favour of attacking the enemy. Fayette appeared inclined to that opinion, without openly embracing it. General Greene was also disposed to hazard more than the councils of the

the majority would sanction. The country, he thought, must be protected; and if, in doing so, an engagement should become unavoidable, it would be necessary to fight the enemy.

In the morning of the 18th Philadelphia was evacuated, and, in a few hours, all the British troops were encamped at Gloster point, on the Jersey shore. Although they availed themselves, to a great extent, of the facility of transporting their effects by water, yet their line of march was so lengthened and incumbered by baggage, and the weather was so intensely hot, that they were under the necessity of proceeding very slowly. Indeed, their movements wore the appearance of purposed delay, and were well calculated to favour the opinion, that Sir Henry Clinton was willing to be overtaken, and wished for a general engagement.

He proceeded slowly through Haddonfield, mount Holly, Slab town, and Crosswick, to Allens town, and Amelys town, which places he reached on the 24th. General Maxwell, who had been posted at mount Holly, retired on his approach, and joined General Dickinson, who was collecting the Jersey militia; but they were able to give very little other interruption to the march of the enemy, than by breaking up the bridges in his route.

Thus far the road taken by Sir Henry Clinton left

left his future destination entirely uncertain. Admitting New York to be his immediate object, he might either take the direct course to Amboy, or pursue the lower and rather more circuitous route to Sandy hook. It was believed by some, that he designed to occupy the high country, and to bring on a general engagement, or to seize the passes through the high lands of the Hudson. He had not diverged from the course proper for the attainment of either of those objects.

As his line of march, until he passed Crosswick, lay directly up the Delaware, and at no great distance from it, General Washington, who was in motion the day on which Philadelphia was evacuated, found it necessary to make an extensive circuit, and crossed that river higher up, at Coryell's ferry. The movements of the enemy were so very slow, as to strengthen the opinion that a general engagement was wished for; and as this, according to the plan settled in council, was to be avoided by the American army, he kept possession of the high grounds in Jersey, which enabled him to retain a choice, either of coming to, or avoiding an action; and, at the same time, to continue in the direct course to cover the important passes in the highlands, if there should be any indications of an intention to make a rapid movement against them. He crossed the river on the

22d, and remained the 23d at Hopewell, in the high country adjacent to the ferry.

General Arnold, whose wounds were not yet sufficiently healed to fit him for active service, was apppointed to take possession of Philadelphia. He was directed to detach from thence about four hundred continental troops, and as many militia as could be collected in the city and the adjacent country, to advance on the rear of the enemy. If General Cadwallader could be prevailed on to command them, he was named by Washington for that service, as an officer in whom full confidence might be placed. Cadwallader engaged in it with alacrity, but could only add to his continental force about fifty volunteers from Philadelphia, and about forty militia from the neighbourhood, who came out under General Lacy.

On the 23d of June, while at Hopewell, Morgan was detached with orders to join the right flank of the enemy, and use his utmost endeavours to annoy it.

On the 24th, Sir Henry Clinton was encamped at and about Allen's town. The main body of the American army was in Hopewell township, about five miles from Prince town. Major-general Dickinson, with the Jersey militia, consisting of about one thousand men, and a brigade of continental troops commanded by Maxwell.

well, hung on the left flank towards the rear of the enemy. General Cadwallader, with Jackson's regiment and a very few militia, was entirely in their rear; and Colonel Morgan, with his regiment of six hundred men, was on their right. These detachments were furnished with guides by General Dickinson, were ordered to harass the enemy as much as possible, and to keep up a constant communication with the commander in chief, who proposed to regulate his movements by those of the hostile army.

Notwithstanding the almost concurrent opinion of the general officers against risking an action, Washington appears to have been very strongly inclined to that measure. With a mind of uncommon firmness, he possessed a temper enterprising, as well as cautious, and could not readily be persuaded that, with an army he believed to be rather superior in point of numbers to the enemy, he put too much in hazard by fighting him. His general officers therefore were again assembled, and the situation of the two armies once more submitted to them. His own, exclusive of Maxwell's brigade, was stated to amount, according to a field return received a few days before, to ten thousand six hundred and eight-four rank and file. The force of the enemy could not be so accurately stated, but was believed to be rather less than ten thousand. This was the seventh day since the eva-

cuation of Philadelphia, and in that time the British army had marched less than forty miles. They were, by the latest advices, in two columns; the one on the Allen town, and the other on the Bordon town road.

Under these circumstances, he asked, whether it would be advisable, of choice, to hazard a general action? And, if it would, whether it should be brought on by an immediate general attack, by a partial attack, or by taking such a position as must compel the enemy to become the assailants?

If the council should be of opinion that it was unavoidable to hazard an engagement, then he asked what measures could be taken, with safety to the army, to annoy the enemy in his march, should he proceed through the Jerseys?

The same opinion respecting a general action which had been given the day before the movement from Valley-forge, was repeated. The proposition was peremptorily and decidedly negatived. But it was proposed to strengthen the corps on the left flank of the enemy, with a reinforcement of fifteen hundred men, to act as occasion might serve; and that the main body of the army should preserve a relative position, so as to be able to act as circumstances might require.

In pursuance of this opinion of his military council, a detachment of fifteen hundred select men, under Brigadier-general Scott, was immediately

diately formed, and marched to the lines; and the next day the army moved forward to Kingston.

Though every general officer except Wayne had signed the opinion given on the 24th respecting the strength of this last detachment, yet the council had, on that point, been nearly equally divided. Those who were decidedly against hazarding a serious action, either general or partial, conceived the number agreed on competent to every purpose which ought to be contemplated; while others, who privately wished to bring on something more than light skirmishing, but had not sufficient confidence in themselves to hazard the responsibility of openly advising the measure, were desirous of augmenting it to two thousand, or two thousand five hundred men.

General Washington still retained his inclination to engage the enemy, and finding himself supported by the private wishes of some officers whom he highly valued, he determined to take his measures on his own responsibility, and without calling another council. Hearing on the 25th of June that the enemy were on their march towards Monmouth court-house, he resolved still further to strengthen the forces on the lines; and in pursuance of this resolution, dispatched Brigadier-general Wayne with a further detachment of one thousand select men. As the continental troops now in front of the main army amounted to at

least four thousand men, a number believed to be capable of rendering the service expected from them, he deemed it proper to employ a major-general to collect and command them.

This tour of duty Major-general Lee had a right to claim; but as he was openly and strongly against hazarding even a partial engagement, and expected that, in conformity with the advice signed by all the general officers then in camp, with one single exception, nothing would be attempted further than merely to reconnoitre the enemy, and restrain plundering parties, he showed no disposition to assert his claim, and very readily assenting to the private wishes of General Washington, that the command should be given to an officer whose view of the service comported more with his own, yielded this important tour of duty to La Fayette. The orders given this general were, to proceed immediately with the detachment, and to form a junction as expeditiously as possible with that under General Scott; to use the most effectual means for gaining the enemy's left flank and rear, and giving them every degree of annoyance. All the continental parties on the lines were placed under his command, and he was directed to take such measures, in concert with General Dickinson, as would most impede the march of the enemy, and occasion them the greatest loss. For these purposes, he was to attack

tack them as occasion might require, by detachment, and, if a proper opening should be given, he was to act against them with the whole force under his command.

A letter was at the same time addressed to General Dickinson, placing the militia under the orders of La Fayette.

These dispositions and orders manifest very conclusively the intention and wish of the commander in chief. They could scarcely fail to bring on an engagement. Wayne had openly espoused that measure, and Fayette in council, although he joined in the opinion against seeking a general action, had been in favour of a partial one; and would therefore, if any proper occasion offered, certainly attack with his whole force; which would as certainly produce such measures on the part of the enemy as would render it proper to support him with the whole army. He was accompanied too by Colonel Hamilton, who felt the strongest desire to signalise the detachment, and to accomplish all the wishes of the commander in chief.

Immediately after detaching this additional body of troops, the whole army moved to Cranberry, in order to be sufficiently near to support them. They reached that place about nine o'clock on the morning of the 26th of June.

The intense heat of the weather, a heavy storm, and a temporary want of provisions, prevented

the army from resuming its march that day. The advanced corps being differently circumstanced, had pressed forward, and taken a position on the Monmouth road, about five miles in rear of the enemy, with the intention of attacking them next morning on their march. It was found too remote, and too far on the right, to be supported in case of action, and orders were therefore sent to the marquis to file off by his left towards English town. These orders were executed early in the morning of the 27th.

Although General Lee had at first been disposed to yield the advanced party to La Fayette, from an opinion that no effective service was intended, and that his station in the army was more honourable, that officer had scarcely marched, when Lee began to regret his decision. He perceived that, in the opinion of all the general officers, a greater importance was attached to this command than he had allowed it; and that his reputation was in danger of being in some degree impaired by connecting his strenuous opposition to even a partial action with his afterwards declining the command of a very strong detachment, which it was expected would fall in with and engage the rear of the enemy. He therefore now solicited very earnestly for the command he had before declined accepting.

To relieve the feelings of Lee without wounding those of La Fayette, General Washington de-

tached him with two other brigades to English town, to support the marquis. He would of course have direction of the whole front division, which would now amount to five thousand men; but it was expressly stipulated, that if any enterprise had been already formed by La Fayette, it should be proceeded with in like manner as if the commanding officer had not been changed. To this condition Lee acceded, and, with two additional brigades, joined the front division of the army, the whole of which was now under his direction, and encamped at English town. The main army also moved forward about three miles in his rear. Morgan's corps still hovered on the right flank of the British, and General Dickinson on their left.

Sir Henry Clinton had taken a very strong position. He was encamped on the high grounds about Monmouth court-house, having his right flank in the skirt of a small wood, while his left was secured by a very thick one, and a morass running towards his rear. His whole front was also covered by a wood, and, for a considerable distance towards his left, by a morass.*

This position seemed unassailable, and the enemy were within twelve miles of the high grounds about Middle town, after their reaching which, it

* Letter of Sir Henry Clinton.

would

would be impossible to attempt any thing against them with a prospect of success.

Under these circumstances, General Washington determined to attack their rear the moment they should move from their ground. This determination was immediately communicated to General Lee, who was ordered to make his dispositions for the attack, and to keep his troops constantly lying on their arms, that he might be in readiness to take advantage of the first movement of the enemy. Corresponding orders were also given to the rear division of the army.

About five in the morning of June the 28th intelligence was received from General Dickinson that the front of the enemy was in motion. The troops were immediately put under arms, and orders were dispatched by an aid-de-camp to General Lee, directing him to move on and attack the rear, "unless there should be powerful reasons to the contrary." He was at the same time informed, that the main army would be on its march to support him.

Sir Henry Clinton had perceived, from the appearance on his flanks and rear on the 27th, that the American army was in his neighbourhood, and had therefore changed the order of his march. The whole baggage was placed under the care of General Knyphausen, while the strength and

and flower of his army, entirely unincumbered, formed the rear division, which was placed under the particular command of Lord Cornwallis, and was accompanied by Sir Henry in person.

To avoid pressing on General Knyphausen, Cornwallis remained on his ground till about eight o'clock, and then descending from the heights of Freehold into a plain of about three miles in extent, took up his line of march in rear of the front division.

On receiving the orders which had been given the preceding evening, and repeated in the morning, General Lee had made the dispositions necessary for their execution, and, soon after the rear of the enemy was in motion, he prepared to attack it. General Dickinson had been directed to detach some of his best troops to take such a position as to co-operate with him; and Morgan also was ordered to act on their right flank, but with so much caution, as to be able readily to extricate himself, and form a junction with Lee, should it be necessary.

He appeared on the heights of Freehold soon after the enemy had left them, and following the British into the plain, gave directions to General Wayne to attack their covering party in the rear, so as to cause them to halt, but not to press them sufficiently either to force them up to the main body, or to draw reinforcements from thence to their

their aid. In the mean time he proposed to gain their front by a shorter road on their left, and, entirely intercepting their communication with the line, to bear them off before they could be assisted.

While in the execution of this design, a gentleman of General Washington's suite came up to gain intelligence, and to him Lee communicated his present object.

Before he reached the point of destination, there was reason to believe that the enemy were in much greater force than had been expected. The intelligence on this subject was very contradictory, and the face of the country, which was a good deal covered with woods, was well calculated to conceal the truth. He therefore deemed it advisable to reconnoitre them in person, and to satisfy himself, from his own view, of their numbers.

Sir Henry Clinton, soon after the rear division was in full march, had received intelligence that a column of the American army was on his left flank. This being a corps of militia, was soon dispersed, and the march continued. When his rear guard had descended from the hills, he saw it followed by a strong corps; soon after which a cannonade upon it was commenced from some pieces of artillery commanded by Colonel Oswald; and at the same time he received intelligence that a respectable

respectable force had shewn itself on both his flanks. Believing a design to have been formed on his baggage, which, in the defiles through which it was to pass, would be considerably exposed, he determined, in order to secure it from the danger with which it was threatened, to attack the troops in his rear with all his force so vigorously as to compel them to call off those on his flanks. This induced him to march back his whole rear division, which movement was making as Lee advanced, for the purpose of reconnoitring, to the front of the wood which adjoined the plain that has been mentioned. He soon perceived himself to have been mistaken in the force which formed the rear of the British; but he yet proposed to engage on that ground, although his judgment, as was afterwards stated by himself on an inquiry into his conduct, disapproved of it, there being a morass immediately in his rear, which could not be passed without difficulty, and which would necessarily impede the arrival of reinforcements to his aid, and embarrass his retreat should he be finally overpowered. This was about ten o'clock. While both armies were preparing for action, and performing those previous manœuvres which each deemed necessary, General Scott (as stated by General Lee) mistook an oblique march of an American column for a retreat; and, in the apprehension

apprehension of being abandoned, left his position, and repassed the ravine in his rear.

Being himself of opinion that the ground on which the army was drawn up was by no means favourable to them, Lee did not correct the error Scott had committed, but directed the whole detachment to regain the heights they had passed.

He was pressed by the enemy, and some slight skirmishing ensued during this retrograde movement, in which very little damage was done on either side.

When the first firing announced the commencement of the action, the rear of the army threw off their packs, and advanced rapidly to the support of the front. As they approached the scene of action, General Washington, who had received no intelligence from Lee notifying his retreat, rode forward; and about noon, after the army had marched about five miles, to his utter astonishment and mortification, met the advanced corps retiring before the enemy, without having made a single effort to maintain their ground. Those whom he first fell in with neither understood the motives which had governed General Lee, nor his present design; and could give no other information than that, by his orders, they had fled without fighting.

General Washington rode to the rear of the division,

vision, which he found closely pressed. There he met Lee, to whom he spoke in terms of some warmth, implying disapprobation of his conduct. He also gave immediate orders to the regiments commanded by Colonel Stewart and Lieutenant-colonel Ramsay, to form on a piece of ground which he deemed proper for the purpose of checking the enemy, who were advancing rapidly on them. General Lee was then ordered to take proper measures with the residue of his force to stop the British column on that ground, and the commander in chief rode back himself to arrange the rear division of the army.

These orders were executed with firmness. A sharp conflict ensued; and when forced from the ground on which he had been placed, Lee brought off his troops in good order, and was then directed to form in the rear of English town.

The check thus given the enemy afforded time to draw up the left wing and second line of the American army on an eminence, and in a wood, in the rear, covered by a morass in front. Lord Stirling, who commanded the left wing, brought up some field pieces, which played with considerable effect on the enemy, who had passed the morass, and were pressing on to the charge. These pieces, with the aid of several parties of infantry detached for the purpose, effectually put a stop to their advance.

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The right wing of the army was for the day commanded by General Greene. For the expedition of the march, and to prevent the enemy from turning the right flank, he had been ordered to file off by the new church, two miles from English town, and to fall into the Monmouth road, a small distance in the rear of the court-house, while the residue of the army proceeded directly to that place. He had advanced on this road considerably to the right, and rather beyond the ground on which the armies were now engaged, when he was informed of the retreat of the party commanded by Lee, and of the new disposition of the troops occasioned by that circumstance. He immediately changed his route, and marching up with the wing he commanded, took a very advantageous position on the right.

Finding themselves warmly opposed in front, the enemy attempted to turn the left flank of the American army, but were repulsed, and driven back by parties of infantry detached to oppose them. They then attempted the right with as little success. General Greene had advanced a body of troops with artillery to a commanding piece of ground in his front, which not only disappointed their design of turning the right, but severely enfiladed the party which yet remained in front of the left wing. At this moment General Wayne had advanced with a body of infantry to engage them

them in front, who kept up so hot and well-directed a fire of musketry, that they soon gave way, and withdrew behind the ravine, to the ground on which the first halt had been made, where the action had commenced immediately after the arrival of General Washington. Here the British line was formed on very strong ground. Both flanks were secured by thick woods and morasses, while their front could only be reached through a narrow pass. The day had been intensely hot, and the troops were much fatigued. Notwithstanding this circumstance, and the difficulty with which the enemy could be approached, General Washington resolved to renew the engagement. For this purpose, he ordered Brigadier-general Poor, with his own, and the Carolina brigade, to gain their right flank, while Woodford, with his brigade, should turn their left. At the same time the artillery were ordered to advance, and play on them in front. These orders were obeyed with alacrity; but the impediments on the flanks of the enemy were so considerable, that before they could be overcome, and the troops could approach them near enough to commence the attack, it was nearly dark. Under these circumstances it was thought most advisable to defer further operations till next morning. For the purpose of commencing them with the return of light, the brigades which had been detached to the flanks of the enemy continued

ed on their ground through the night, and the other troops lay on their arms in the field of battle, in order to be in perfect readiness to support them. General Washington, who had through the day been extremely active, and entirely regardless of personal danger, passed the night in his cloak in the midst of his soldiers.

In the mean time the British were employed in removing their wounded. About midnight they marched away in such silence, that their retreat was effected without the knowledge of General Poor, though he lay very near them.

As it was perfectly certain that the high grounds about Middleton would be gained by the enemy before it would be practicable to overtake them, in which position they could not be attacked with any advantage; as the face of the country afforded no prospect of opposing their embarkation; and as the battle already fought had terminated in such a manner as to make a general impression favourable to the reputation of the American arms; it was thought advisable to relinquish the pursuit. Leaving the Jersey brigade, Morgan's corps, and some other light troops,* to hover about them to countenance desertion, and protect the country from their depredations, it was resolved to move

* The militia had returned to their homes immediately after the action.

the

the main body of the army to the Hudson, and take a position which should effectually cover the important passes in the highlands.

The commander in chief was highly gratified with the conduct of his troops in this action. Their behaviour, he said, after they recovered from the first surprise occasioned by the unexpected retreat of the advanced corps, could not be surpassed. General Wayne was particularly mentioned. His conduct and bravery, it was declared, merited peculiar commendation. The artillery too were spoken of in terms of high praise. Both the officers and men of that corps who were engaged, were said to have distinguished themselves in a remarkable manner.

The loss of the Americans in the battle of Monmouth was eight officers and sixty-one privates killed, and about one hundred and sixty wounded. Among the slain were Lieutenant-colonel Bonner, of Pennsylvania, and Major Dickinson, of Virginia, both of whom were much regretted. One hundred and thirty were missing, but of these a considerable number afterwards rejoined their regiments.

In his official letter, Sir Henry Clinton states his dead and missing at four officers, and one hundred and eighty-four privates, his wounded at sixteen officers, and one hundred and fifty-four privates. This account, so far as respects the dead, cannot

be correct, as four officers and two hundred and forty-five privates were buried on the field, by persons appointed for that purpose, who made their report to the commander in chief; and some few were afterwards found and buried, so as to increase the number to nearly three hundred. The uncommon heat of the day was fatal to several on both sides.

As usual, when a battle has not been decisive, both parties claimed the victory. In the early part of the day, the advantage was certainly with the British; in the latter part, it may be pronounced, with equal certainty, to have been with the Americans. They maintained their ground, repulsed the enemy by whom they were attacked, were prevented only by the night, and the retreat of Sir Henry Clinton, from renewing the action, and suffered in killed and wounded less than their adversaries.

It is true, that Sir Henry Clinton effected what he states to have been his principal object, which was to save his baggage. But when it is recollected, that the general officers of the American army had, in full council, decided against hazarding an action, that this advice must of necessity have trammelled the conduct, and circumscribed the views of the commander in chief, he will be admitted to have effected no considerable object, in giving the American arms the appearance of superiority,

riority, which was certainly acquired by this engagement.

Independent of the loss sustained in this action, the British army was considerably weakened in its way from Philadelphia to New York. About one hundred prisoners were made, and near a thousand soldiers, principally foreigners, many of whom had married in Philadelphia, deserted the British standard during the march.

While the armies were traversing the Jerseys, Gates, who commanded on the north river, by a well-timed and judicious movement down the Hudson, which was highly approved by General Washington, threatened New York, for the purpose of restraining the garrison of that place from reinforcing Sir Henry Clinton, should such a measure be contemplated.

The conduct of Lee was very generally disapproved. As, however, he had possessed a large share of the confidence and good opinion of the commander in chief, it is probable that explanations might have been made which would have rescued him from the imputations cast on him, and have restored him to the esteem of the army, could his haughty temper have brooked the indignity he believed to have been offered him on the field of battle. General Washington had taken no measures in consequence of the events of that day, and probably would have come to no resolution

concerning them, without an amicable explanation, when he received from Lee a letter, expressed in very unbecoming terms, in which he manifestly assumed the station of a superior, and required reparation for the injury sustained from the very singular expressions said to have been used on the day of the action by the commander in chief.

This letter was answered after due deliberation by an assurance, that so soon as circumstances would admit of an inquiry, he should have an opportunity of justifying himself to the army, to America, and to the world in general, or of convincing them that he had been guilty of disobedience of orders, and misbehaviour before the enemy. On the same day, on Lee's expressing a wish for a speedy investigation of his conduct, and for a court martial, rather than a court of inquiry, he was arrested,

1st. For disobedience of orders, in not attacking the enemy on the 28th of June, agreeably to repeated instructions.

2dly, For misbehaviour before the enemy on the same day, in making an unnecessary, disorderly, and shameful retreat.

3dly. For disrespect to the commander in chief, in two letters.

Previously to the arrest, and to the answer given to the first letter received from General Lee, accusations against his conduct had been made by several

several officers of his detachment, and particularly by Generals Wayne and Scott, in which the transactions of the day, not being well understood, were represented in colours much more unfavourable to Lee, than on a full investigation they afterwards were. These representations, most probably, produced the strength of the expressions contained in the second article of the charge. A court martial was soon called, over which Lord Stirling presided, and, after a tedious investigation, Lee was found guilty of all the charges exhibited against him, and sentenced to be suspended for one year. This sentence was afterwards, though with some hesitation, approved almost unanimously by Congress. The court softened, in some degree, the severity of the second charge, by finding him guilty, not in its very words, but of misbehaviour before the enemy, by making an unnecessary, and, in some few instances, a disorderly retreat.

Lee defended himself with his accustomed ability. He proved, that after the retreat had commenced, in consequence of General Scott's repassing the ravine on the approach of the enemy, he had designed to form on the first advantageous ground he should find; and that, in his own opinion, and in the opinion of some other officers, no safe and advantageous position had presented itself until he met General Washington, at which time it was

his intention to fight the enemy on the very ground afterwards taken by that officer. He suggested a variety of reasons justifying his retreat, which, if they do not absolutely establish its propriety, yet gave it so questionable a form, as to render it probable, that a public examination never would have taken place, could his proud spirit have stooped to offer explanation instead of outrage to the commander in chief.

His suspension gave very general satisfaction through the army. Without being masters of his conduct as a military man in making the retreat, they perfectly understood the insult offered their general by his letters, and whether rightly or not, believed his object to have been to disgrace Washington, and obtain for himself the supreme command. So devotedly were all ranks attached to the commander in chief, that the mere suspicion of such a design would have rendered his further continuance in the army extremely difficult.

Whatever judgment may be formed on the propriety of retreating before the enemy, it seems difficult to justify either the omission to keep the commander in chief continually informed of his situation and intentions, or the rude letters written after the action was over.

Congress was highly gratified with the success which attended their arms at Monmouth. In a resolution which passed unanimously, their thanks were

were given to General Washington for the activity with which he marched from the camp at Valley-forge, in pursuit of the enemy, for his distinguished exertions in forming the line of battle, and for his great good conduct in the action; and he was requested to signify the thanks of Congress to the officers and men under his command, who distinguished themselves by their conduct and valour in the battle.

The attention of General Washington was now turned principally to the North river, towards which the march of his army was directed, with the intention of continuing some time about Haverstraw.

After remaining a few days on the high grounds of Middleton, Sir Henry Clinton, on the 5th of July, proceeded to Sandy hook, where he passed his army over to New York.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER IX.

Count d'Estaign arrives on the Coast of Virginia with a French Fleet under his Command—He meditates an Attack on the British Fleet at New York, but is obliged to relinquish it; sails to Rhode Island, and arrives off Newport—Sails out to attack Lord Howe, who appears off Rhode Island—General Sullivan lays Siege to Newport.—Both Fleets dispersed by a Storm—D'Estaign returns to Newport, and, against the Solicitations of Sullivan, sails for Boston to refit—In consequence of the Departure of the French Fleet, Sullivan raises the Siege of Newport—Action between Sullivan and the British Army—Sullivan retreats with his Army to the Continent—Sullivan, in one of his general Orders, makes use of Expressions which offend the Count—Count d'Estaign expresses to Congress his Dissatisfaction with General Sullivan—General Washington labours to heal these Discontents, in which he succeeds—Lord Howe resigns the Command of the British Fleet—Colonel Baylor's Regiment surprised—Captain Donop with his Corps attacked by Colonel Butler and

and defeated—Expedition of the British against Egg Harbour—Pulaski surprised, and his Infantry cut off.

BEFORE General Washington could reach the ground he designed to occupy, intelligence was received that a very powerful French fleet, under the command of the Count d'Estaign, had appeared off Chingoteague inlet, the northern extremity of the coast of Virginia.

The count had sailed from Toulon the 13th of April, with twelve ships of the line and six frigates, having on board a respectable body of land forces. His destination was the Delaware, and sanguine hopes were entertained that he would find the British fleet in that river, and their army in Philadelphia. A very uncommon continuance of adverse winds protracted the voyage across the Atlantic, to the extraordinary length of eighty-seven days. This unusual, and to the English, providential circumstance, saved both their fleet and army. A passage of seventy-five days would have brought D'Estaign to the Delaware, while Howe was yet within the capes; and such was the decided superiority of the French force, that the British fleet must inevitably have been destroyed, or have fallen into their hands. Such an event must have been certainly and quickly succeeded by the destruction of their army.

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On his reaching the capes of the Delaware, the count announced his arrival to Congress, and having failed in accomplishing his first object, proceeded along the coast to New York, in the hope of being able to attack the British fleet in the harbour of that place.

Here again the enemy were indebted for their safety to some fortunate incidents.

In the course of the preceding winter, the violence of the storms had broken through the narrow isthmus by which Sandy hook was connected with the continent, and had converted the peninsula into an absolute island. This rendered it necessary to pass over the army from the main to the hook, on a bridge of boats, which would have been impracticable, if obstructed by the French fleet. It was effected the very day on which D'Estaign appeared off Chingoteague inlet.

At Paramus, in Jersey, General Washington received a letter from the president of Congress, advising him of this important event, and requesting that he would concert measures with the count for conjoint and offensive operations.

The next day, July 13th, he received a second letter on the same subject, containing two resolutions of Congress, the one directing him to cooperate with the French admiral, and the other authorizing him to call on the states from New Hampshire to New Jersey inclusively, for such aids

aids from their militia as he might deem necessary for the operations which might be agreed on.

He determined, immediately to proceed to the White plains, from whence the army might with more facility co-operate in the execution of any attempt which might be made by the fleet, and dispatched Lieutenant-colonel Laurens, one of his aids-de-camp, a young gentleman distinguished for his military and civil accomplishments, with every information relative to the enemy, as well as to his own army, of which he was himself possessed, and which might be useful to D'Estaign. Lieutenant-colonel Laurens was authorized to consult on future conjoint operations, and to establish conventional signals for the purpose of facilitating the communication of intelligence. At the same time, persons supposed to be best acquainted with the water on the bar and in the harbour, and who were superior in point of character to ordinary pilots, were sought out and dispatched to the count D'Estaign, in order to furnish the information which might determine him respecting the proposition for attacking the British fleet in the harbour, and, if that resolution should be taken, to give him their aid towards its execution.

Immediately after his arrival off the hook, the French admiral dispatched Major de Chouin, a gentleman of his family, to General Washington, for

for the purpose of communicating fully his views, and the strength of his fleet. The first object of D'Estaign was to attack the British fleet in the harbour of New York. If this should be found impracticable, he was then desirous of turning his attention to Rhode island. To assist in coming to a result on these enterprises, Lieutenant-colonel Hamilton was immediately dispatched, with such further communications as had suggested themselves since the departure of Lieutenant-colonel Laurens.

From the inquiries made by General Washington, he apprehended that the water on the bar at the entrance of the harbour, was not of sufficient depth to admit the passage of the largest ships of the French fleet, without much difficulty and danger. Should such be the fact, the attempt would be too hazardous to be advisable, and must necessarily be abandoned. That the least possible inconvenience might be sustained from this circumstance, he very providently turned his attention to those measures which would be necessary for an enterprise to be undertaken, on the failure of that contemplated against New York.

General Sullivan had been detached in the preceding winter to command the troops in Rhode island, and directions were now given him to call on the New England states, immediately to furnish their quotas of militia, so as to make his army

strong

strong enough to ensure success to the enterprise against the enemy in Rhode island, should it be determined on. He was also directed to prepare magazines, to collect the boats necessary for a descent, to engage the best pilots, and to make himself perfect master of the situation and strength of the enemy both by land and sea.

As the opinion that the attack on New York would be unadvisable, gained strength from the information received in its support, the Marquis de la Fayette was detached, with two brigades, to join General Sullivan at Providence, and to put himself under the command of that officer. The next day, Lieutenant-colonel Hamilton returned to camp, with the final determination of the Count d'Estaign to relinquish the meditated attack on the fleet in the harbour of New York, in consequence of the impracticability of passing the bar at the hook.

General Greene was immediately ordered to Rhode island, of which state he was a native, and where he possessed great influence, for the purpose of commanding under Sullivan; and Lieutenant-colonel Laurens was also directed to proceed thither; and, attaching himself to the French admiral, to facilitate as much as possible all his views, by procuring whatever might contribute to give them effect; after which, he was to act with the army under Sullivan.

D'Estaign

D'Estaign had come to anchor, and continued without the hook for eleven days. During this time, great part of which was employed in making the necessary soundings, and obtaining the requisite information respecting the bar and the harbour, the wind had been so unfavourable, that, had even the depth of the water admitted of an attack, it could not have been made. So long, therefore, as the count maintained his position, the expectation that he would seize the first fair wind, to force his way into the harbour, was kept up, and the preparations to receive him were such as threatened a very serious conflict.

The naval force under Lord Howe consisted of six ships of the line, and four of fifty guns, with a number of frigates and smaller vessels. Though their original crews were insufficient, yet, from the uncommon spirit which pervaded the whole body of seamen at that place, they were soon well manned, as well as ably officered. A degree of indignant resentment at the interference of France in what was termed a domestic quarrel, seemed to call forth a much greater display of courage, and of zeal, than would probably have been exhibited on an ordinary occasion. The ardour which prevailed through the army, the navy, and the transport service, extended itself to all ranks of people, who offered themselves as volunteers; and the masters and mates of the merchantmen at

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New York, took their stations at the guns with the common sailors. This spirit was guided by an officer of distinguished talents, who, having received notice of the arrival of the French fleet on the coast, some days before its appearance off the hook, had commenced the best dispositions for its reception, which were completed while it lay at anchor in their view. With these advantages, the success of an attempt to force a passage into the harbour might well have been questioned.*

When D'Estaign weighed anchor, and his fleet was put in motion, the wind and tide were peculiarly favourable to the passage of the bar, which it was supposed he intended to attempt. It was to the British admiral and general a moment of awful expectation. The attempt, if successful, must have been attended with the loss of both their fleet and army; if unfortunate, a brilliant victory, and the destruction of the assailants, might be contemplated as its almost certain consequence. Their suspense, however, was not of long duration. The fleet got under sail, and steering towards the south, was soon out of sight.†

An expedition against Rhode island having now been decided on, the count, after standing

* Ann. Reg. † Ramsay.

southwardly as far as the mouth of the Delaware, changed his course; and, on the 25th of July, the whole fleet appeared off Newport, and cast anchor about five miles from that place, just without Brenton's lodge.

Sir Henry Clinton, soon after his arrival at New York, apprehensive for the safety of the troops at Newport, had made considerable detachments from his army to reinforce Major-general Pigot, who commanded in Rhode island, and the garrison now amounted to about six thousand effectives. The main body lay at Newport, a town situated on the west of the isthmus, which connects the southern with the northern and principal part of the island, and which was defended by a chain of redoubts stretching almost across the island from east to west, on some high grounds north of the town, and by batteries facing the water. Some other works, occupied by small detachments, had been thrown up at the north end of the island, to prevent a descent from the adjacent continent; and three regiments were posted on Connanicut island, which lies to the west of Newport.*

The American army under General Sullivan lay on the main, about the town of Providence.

There are three entrances to Rhode island; one

* Am. Reg.

to

to the east called Seakonet, or the eastern passage; another on the west of the island, between it and Connanicut, called the main channel; and a third on the west of Connanicut, called the west, or Naraganset passage; this unites with the main channel at the north end of Connanicut island. Each of these passages was guarded by several small frigates and gallies, which were immediately destroyed to prevent their falling into the hands of the French, who stationed some ships of war both in the Seakonet and Naraganset passages, while they effectually blocked up the main channel, by anchoring at its mouth.* General Sullivan went on board the admiral soon after his arrival, and a plan of operations for the allied forces was concerted. It was proposed, in the first instance, to seize Connanicut island, but this place was immediately evacuated by General Pigot, who very judiciously concentred his whole force about Newport. It was then determined that the allied arms should be directed as soon as possible against that town. According to the plan of attack which had been concerted, the fleet was to enter the harbour, and land the troops of his most Christian majesty on the west side of the island, a little to the north of Dyer's island. The Americans were to land at the same time on the opposite coast,

* Ann. Reg.

under cover of the guns of a frigate. Thus they would be within the works which had been erected on the north end of the island, for the purpose of preventing a descent from the continent. With those works it was not designed to intermeddle, because the troops stationed in them would fall of course, if the main body should be subdued.

To be in readiness for the execution of this plan, on the 6th of August General Greene marched a detachment of continental and state troops, with some militia, to Tiverton, which lies on the east side of the east channel.

Although the appearance of the French fleet had animated the whole country, and inspired very generally the hope of speedily terminating the arduous and distressing conflict, by the total destruction of the British forces in America; although, even before the receipt of the letters from General Washington, directing immediate preparations for the expedition against Rhode island, which might eventually take place, General Sullivan had, on the arrival of reinforcements from New York, called on the states for aids of militia; yet the delays inseparable from measures to bring husbandmen into the field as soldiers, and the difficulties of drawing them from their farms, were such, that operations of the last importance, exposed inevitably to great hazard by delay, were necessarily suspended. To avoid this was the

more

more to be desired, because the success of the enterprise essentially depended on maintaining the superiority at sea, which there was much reason to apprehend would be wrested from them, since intelligence had been received that considerable reinforcements to the British fleet might be expected. An additional motive for urging the utmost dispatch was, that every day the works of the enemy were strengthened, and additional impediments were sunk in such places as might obstruct the approaches by water to their most important batteries.*

As the militia of Massachussetts and New Hampshire, who were principally volunteers, approached, General Sullivan joined General Greene at Tiverton, on the 8th of August, and it was agreed that the fleet should enter the main channel immediately, and that the descent should be made the succeeding day.

In execution of this plan, the ships of war entered the channel, and passed the British batteries into the harbour, without receiving or doing any considerable damage.

The militia not arriving precisely at the time

* The spirit of the nation was at this time so high, that a great body of volunteers offered themselves for the service, and thus there was less delay on this occasion, and less interruption given to the labour of the country than in almost any other, where a large body of militia was to be called out.

they were expected, General Sullivan could not hazard the attack, and stated to the count the necessity of postponing it yet another day. Meanwhile, the preparations for the descent being perceived by the enemy, the troops were recalled in the night from the north end of the island into the lines of Newport. This was not perceived by General Sullivan till the next morning. On discovering it, he at once determined to avail himself of that circumstance, and take immediate possession of the works which had been abandoned. He was induced to do this, from an apprehension that the British might possibly return to them.

The whole army, in conformity with this resolution, crossed the east passage, and landed on the north end of Rhode island. Information of this movement was immediately given to the admiral, who highly resented the indelicacy supposed to have been committed by Sullivan in landing before the French, and without consulting him.

Unfortunately, some previous difficulties on subjects of mere punctilio had been created. The Count d'Estaign was a land, as well as a sea officer, and held the high rank of lieutenant-general in the service of France. Sullivan being only a major-general, it had been apprehended that the service might sustain some injury in consequence of a misunderstanding on this delicate point, and General Washington had suggested to him the necessity

necessity of taking every precaution to avoid it. This, it was supposed, had been effected in their first conference, at which time it was agreed that the Americans should land first, after which the French should land, to be commanded by the Count d'Estaign in person. The motives for this arrangement are not stated, but, most probably, it was made in consequence of the superior numbers of the Americans, or on some other account, solely with a view to the promotion of the object at that time contemplated. Either his own after reflections, or the suggestions of others, dissatisfied the count with it, and he insisted that the descent should be made on both sides of the island precisely at the same instant, and that one wing of the American army should be attached to the French, and land with them. He also declined commanding in person, and wished the Marquis de la Fayette to take charge of the French troops, as well as of the Americans attached to them.

This alteration of the plan, it was feared, would endanger both parts, and, though not without difficulty, D'Estaign was prevailed on to consent that his demand should be reduced from one wing of the American army to one thousand militia. When, afterwards, General Sullivan crossed over into the island before the time to which he had himself postponed the descent, and without giving previous notice to the count of this movement,

some suspicions seem to have been excited, that the measure was taken with other views than those which were assigned; and no inconsiderable degree of ill humour was manifested on the occasion. He refused to answer Sullivan's letter, and charged Lieutenant-colonel Fleury, who delivered it, with being more an American than a Frenchman, and with preferring the interests and honour of the former to those of the latter.

At this time a British fleet appeared, which, after sailing close into the land, and communicating with General Pigot, withdrew some distance, and came to anchor off Point Judith, just without the narrow inlet leading into the harbour.

After it had been ascertained that the destination of the Count d'Estaign was America, he was followed by a squadron of twelve ships of the line under the command of Admiral Byron, who was designed to relieve Lord Howe, that nobleman having solicited his recall. The vessels composing this squadron meeting with weather unusually bad for the season, and being separated in different storms, arrived, after lingering through a tedious passage, scattered, broken, sickly, dismasted, or otherwise damaged, in various degrees of distress, on different and remote parts of the coast of America. Between the departure of D'Estaign from the hook, on the 22d of July, and the 30th of that month, the Renown of fifty guns from the West Indies, the Raisonable and Centurion of sixty-four

and fifty from Halifax, and the Cornwall (belonging to Byron's squadron), all arrived at Sandy hook.*

This addition to the British fleet, though it left Lord Howe considerably inferior to the Count d'Estaign in point of force, was sufficient to determine him to attempt the relief of Newport. After being detained some time by contrary winds, he sailed from New York on the 6th, and on the 9th appeared in sight of the French fleet, before the intelligence of his departure, which, so soon as it could be obtained, was transmitted by General Washington, had been received by the admiral.

The wind, at the time of his arrival, set directly into the harbour, so that it was impossible to get out of it; but the next morning it shifted suddenly to the north-east, and the count determined to stand out to sea, and give the enemy battle. Previous to his leaving port, he informed General Sullivan, that, on his return, he would land his men as that officer should advise.

The French fleet sailing out of port with a wind which blew directly on the British, had of course the weather gage; which being deemed by Lord Howe too great an advantage to be added to their superior weight of metal, was an object for which he determined to contend with all the skill and judgment he possessed. He therefore weighed an-

* Ann. Reg.

chor,

chor, and stood out to sea. He was followed by D'Estaign, and both fleets were soon out of sight.

The militia had now arrived, and Sullivan's army amounted to about ten thousand men. Some objections were made by La Fayette to his commencing operations before the return of D'Estaign. That officer apprehended that the French admiral would once more feel himself wounded by the circumstance that measures were taken against the enemy without his co-operation; and therefore advised that the army should be advanced to a position in the neighbourhood of Newport, but should not break ground till the count should be in readiness to act in concert with them. It was extremely desirable to avoid whatever might give offence to the great ally, on whose assistance so much depended; but time was deemed of so much importance to an army which could not long be kept together, that this advice was overruled, and it was determined to open the trenches, and commence the siege immediately.

Before this determination could be put in execution, a furious storm of wind and rain came on from the north-east, on the 12th of August, which blew down, and almost irreparably ruined all the tents, rendered the arms unfit for immediate use, and damaged the ammunition, of which fifty rounds per man had just been delivered.

livered. The soldiers having no shelter, suffered extremely, and several perished in the storm, which continued for three days.

On the return of fair weather, as soon as the arms could be cleaned, and fresh ammunition given out, the army moved towards the lines, and encamped between two and three miles from the town of Newport. The succeeding morning the siege was commenced, and continued without any material circumstance for several days.

The situation of the American army, which had as yet received no intelligence from the admiral, and was entirely uncertain of his fate, had become extremely critical. Reinforcements might now without interruption be thrown into Newport, so as to give the enemy the superiority in point of strength, and not only defeat the enterprise, but render their retreat from the island entirely insecure. On the evening of the 19th, their anxieties on this subject were relieved for a moment, by the appearance of the fleet.

The two admirals, desirous, the one of gaining and the other of retaining the advantage of the wind, had employed two days in manœuvring, without coming to action. Towards the close of the second they were on the point of engaging, when they were separated by the violent storm which had been felt so severely on shore, and which dispersed and did great damage to both fleets. Some single vessels afterwards fell in with each

each other, but no important capture was made, and both fleets retired in a very shattered condition, the one to the harbour of New York, and the other to that of Newport.

A letter was immediately dispatched from D'Estaign to Sullivan, informing him that, in pursuance of orders from the king, and of the advice of all his officers, he had taken the resolution to carry the fleet to Boston.

His instructions were, to sail for Boston, if the fleet should meet with any disaster, or if a superior British fleet should appear on the coast.

The injuries sustained from the storm, and the information which had been received that Byron had arrived, were considered as producing the very state of things contemplated by his instructions, and it had been determined to obey them.

This communication threw Sullivan and his army into despair. Success, without the aid of the fleet, could not be hoped for; and they had counted, with almost absolute certainty, on a brilliant termination of the enterprise. General Greene and the Marquis de la Fayette were directed to wait on the admiral with a letter from Sullivan, remonstrating against this resolution, and to use their utmost endeavours to induce him to change it.

They represented to him the certainty of carrying the garrison, if he would only co-operate with

with them for two days. The plan they proposed was to land on the southern part of the island, within all the works erected for defence, against which their present operations were directed, a measure which would very much abridge the duration of the siege, but which could not be attempted without the aid of the fleet. They pressed very strongly on him the importance of this event to France, as well as to America.

They also urged the danger of carrying the fleet in its present shattered state, through such a difficult navigation as that over the shoals of Nantucket; the facility with which it might be repaired at Newport; the superiority of its present station over the harbour of Boston for distressing the enemy; and that, in the event of the arrival of a superior fleet, Boston offered no advantages over Newport. It might with equal ease be blocked up, and could not be so readily defended. To these observations they added, that the expedition had been undertaken on condition that the French fleet and army should co-operate with them; that in confidence of this co-operation, stores to a very great amount had been brought on the island; and that to abandon it in the present state of things would be a reproach and disgrace to their arms. To be deserted at such a critical moment would have a very pernicious influence on the minds of the American people, and would furnish their internal foes, as well as the common enemy, with

with the means of animadverting very severely on their prospects from an alliance with those who could desert them under circumstances such as the present. They concluded with wishing that the utmost harmony and confidence might subsist between the two nations, and especially between their officers; and intreated the admiral, if any personal indiscretions had appeared in conducting the expedition, not to permit them to operate in prejudice to the common cause.

Whatever weight these observations might be entitled to, and whatever impression they might have made on the count, he continued immovable in the determination he had formed.

In making a representation of this conversation, General Greene stated the principal officers on board the fleet to have been the enemies of D'Estaign. He was properly a land officer, and they were dissatisfied with his appointment to command them in the navy. They were therefore determined, as much as possible, to thwart his measures; and to prevent, wherever it could be justified, his achieving any brilliant exploit which might redound to his reputation. In this temper they availed themselves of the letter of his instructions, and unanimously persevered in advising him to relinquish the enterprise and sail for Boston. He could not venture, with such instructions, to act against their unanimous opinion; and, although he seemed himself disposed to re-enter the harbour,

harbour, yet, under their influence, he declined doing so, and sailed from the island.

On the return of Greene and La Fayette, Sullivan, who was chagrined beyond measure at the prospect of losing so fair an occasion to distinguish himself, and render service to his country, made yet another effort to retain the fleet. He addressed a second letter to the admiral, remonstrating against his withdrawing from the enterprise, and pressing him, in any event, to leave his land forces. Lieutenant-colonel Laurens, the bearer of this letter, was also charged with a protest signed by all the general officers of the American army in Rhode island, except Fayette, remonstrating against the measure in terms of great earnestness, and reiterating, with some additions, the arguments which had already been urged by General Greene without effect. The fleet having sailed, a swift privateer was engaged to take Colonel Laurens on board, and pursue it. He soon overtook the count, and delivered the dispatches. That officer was much displeased with the protest, and continued his voyage to Boston.

Thus abandoned by the fleet, Sullivan called the general officers of his army to consult them on the propriety of continuing the siege, of attempting the place by storm, or of retreating with the stores from the island.

He stated his actual force to consist of about nine

nine thousand rank and file, including artillerists; and that a reinforcement of about three thousand militia might be expected in a few days. The force of the enemy was estimated, according to the best computation he could make, at six thousand.

A disposition was at first manifested to attempt an assault, if five thousand volunteers, who had seen nine months service, could be obtained for the enterprise; but the departure of the fleet had so discouraged the militia, that the requisite number could not be had; and in a few days the army was reduced by desertion to little more than five thousand men. This produced a determination, on the 26th of August, to raise the siege and retire to the north end of the island, there to fortify, and wait for events.

They were thus tenacious of the ground they had gained, in the hope that D'Estaign might yet return in time to accomplish the object for which the expedition had been undertaken. To prevail on him to do so, General Hancock and the Marquis de la Fayette set out for Boston, the former to expedite the repairs of the ships, and the latter to use the influence which high rank and character gave him with the admiral.

In the night the camp before Newport was broken up in great silence, and the army retired unobserved towards the works on the north end of the island. The rear was covered by Colonels Livingston

Livingston and Laurens, who commanded light parties on both the east and west roads.

Very early in the morning, the retreat was discovered by the enemy, who immediately followed in two columns, and were engaged on each road, about seven o'clock in the morning, by Livingston and Laurens who, were occasionally reinforced, but were directed to retreat slowly, and in order, to the fortified camp now occupied by the army. These orders were executed with great judgment, and the action was kept up with skill and spirit till the enemy were brought into the neighbourhood of the main body of the Americans, who were drawn up in order of battle on the ground of their encampment. The light troops were then directed to fall back. The British formed on Quaker hill, a very strong piece of ground, something more than a mile in front of the American line.

Sullivan's rear was covered by strong works, and in his front, somewhat to the right, was a redoubt. In this position the two armies cannonaded each other for some time, and several skirmishes continued to take place in front of both lines, till about two o'clock, when the enemy advanced in force, attempted to turn the right flank, and made demonstrations of an intention to dislodge General Greene, who commanded the right wing, from the redoubt in its front.

Four regular regiments were moved forward

to meet them; but these not being strong enough to check them, General Greene advanced with two other regiments of continental troops and Lovell's brigade of militia, and the action, for a short time, was very warm. Colonel Livingston's regiment was ordered by Sullivan to reinforce the right; and, after a sharp engagement for about half an hour, the enemy gave way, and retreated to Quaker hill, where they had first formed. The cannonade was renewed, and kept up with some slight skirmishes of small parties till night.

In the accounts given of this action, both by Sullivan and Greene, the American troops are said to have shown great firmness, and to have moved in the face of the enemy with the coolness and regularity of veterans. Very particular praise was bestowed on Colonel Livingston and Lieutenant-colonel Laurens, especially on the latter. He was declared by Greene to have displayed, in an eminent degree, the talents of a partisan and of a general. Colonel Jackson, Lieutenant-colonel Livingston, Lieutenant-colonel Fleury, and Major Talbot, were also particularly mentioned.

According to the return made by General Sullivan, his loss in killed, wounded, and missing, was two hundred and eleven. Among the slain were four subaltern officers; and among the wounded, one captain, and eight subalterns. The loss of the enemy was supposed to be more considerable.

derable. The return of General Pigot, who, as usual in such cases, claimed the advantage, states it at two hundred and sixty.

The next day (August the 30th) a cannonade was kept up by both armies, but neither thought proper to attack the other. The British were waiting for a strong reinforcement which they expected, and Sullivan had at length determined to withdraw his troops from the island.

Intelligence had been given some few days before, by the commander in chief, of several transports being in the sound, and of a body of the enemy having passed over to Long island. He had at the same time suggested to Sullivan the necessity of securing his retreat from Rhode island, should such a measure become necessary. A letter was now received, giving him certain information that a large body of troops had sailed, most probably for the relief of Newport; and without ordering him to retreat to the continent, a very decided opinion was manifested that such a movement had become proper.

Very fortunately, the reinforcement, which consisted of four thousand men, commanded by Sir Henry Clinton in person, was delayed by adverse winds, till the letter from General Washington giving notice of its having sailed was received. The resolution to evacuate the island was immediately formed.

Throughout the day, Sullivan, with considerable address, continued to take those measures, by strengthening his works, and posting his troops, which were calculated to produce an impression of his being determined to maintain his ground. About six in the afternoon, his orders to prepare for a retreat were given, and his measures were so judiciously taken, that his whole army crossed over, and had debarked on the continent, about Tiverton, by two o'clock in the morning, without having created in the enemy the slightest suspicion that he had contemplated the movement which was now completed. The troops were stationed along the coast from Tiverton to Providence.

Never was retreat more fortunate. The delay of one day must have ruined him. The next day Sir Henry Clinton arrived with his reinforcement, and with ships of war which would probably have entirely cut off the retreat to the continent.

The conduct of Sullivan was highly approved by the commander in chief, and by Congress. A resolution passed in that body, declaring his retreat to have been "prudent, timely, and well conducted." They also voted their thanks to the general and the army under his command, for their fortitude and bravery, in the action of the 29th of August. On Major Morris, the aid-de-camp of Sullivan, who had brought the intelligence of the battle

battle and retreat, they conferred the rank of lieutenant-colonel by brevet.

The Marqnis de la Fayette having repaired to Boston for the purposes of conciliation with the French admiral, and of endeavouring to secure his return as soon as his fleet should be repaired, was absent during the engagement, but by great personal exertions, he rejoined the army just in time to have the charge of the rear guard on the retreat. This young nobleman also was named with approbation, "as well for his great sacrifices of personal feeling to the public good, in consenting, for the interests of the United States, to leave the army when a battle was to be expected, as for the good conduct with which he brought off the piquets."

The complete success of the expedition against Rhode island, had been anticipated throughout America as certain. The capture of that important garrison was believed to be inevitable. The loss of so essential a part of the army would lead, it was supposed, to further and still more valuable results.

In his public letters, General Sullivan had spoken with great confidence of effecting in a few days the object of the enterprise, and Congress, the army, and the people, were equally sanguine.

Proportioned to the exaltation of their hopes,

was the chagrin produced by their disappointment. In general orders issued by Sullivan soon after the departure of D'Estaign, for the purpose of quieting the apprehensions of his army, and impressing them with a confidence in the safety of their situation, under the measures he had taken to secure a retreat, should the enemy be reinforced, he permitted some expressions to escape him, which manifest the irritation of his feelings. —"While," continue the orders, "the general wishes them (the army) to place a proper confidence in him as their commander in chief, whose business it is to attend to their safety, he yet hopes the event will prove America able to procure that by her own arms, which her allies refuse to assist in obtaining." These expressions being understood to impute to the Count d'Estaign, and to the French nation, an indisposition to promote the interests of the United States, wounded the feelings of the French officers, and added, in no small degree, to the resentments of the moment. In subsequent orders, the general stated himself to have been misunderstood by those who supposed him to blame the French admiral, with whose orders he was unacquainted, and of whose conduct he consequently was unable to judge. He at the same time stated explicitly the great aids America had received from France, aids of which he

he ought not to be unmindful, under any disappointment, and which should prevent a too sudden censure of any movement whatever.

The Count d'Estaign, on his part, addressed to Congress a statement of all the movements of the fleet since its arrival on the coast, in which his chagrin and irritation were but ill concealed. He complained much of the disappointments he had experienced, in not receiving adequate supplies of water and provisions; spoke of the delay produced by the American army not being in a condition to act against the common enemy on his first arrival before Newport, and of its afterwards entering the island precipitately. He insisted that the voyage to Boston was necessary for the preservation of the fleet, and declared that he could place no dependence on the fallacious promises made him of water, of masts, and of defence, at Newport. Neither could he rely on a place, against which batteries had been played for some considerable time without much effect, being taken in two days. He claimed much merit for taking Rhode island in his way to Boston, and thereby giving General Sullivan the choice of retreating to the continent, or of continuing the siege.

"It is," continues the letter, "with the noble confidence that I owe to the allies of the king, that I take pleasure in rendering them accounts

which I owe only to his majesty. But it would be wounding the dignity of his crown, if I answered assertions and forms of which I do not complain. Passion dictated them—this is perhaps a proof that reason did not. We presume, that they were inspired by the masters of small barks, who, scarcely knowing the bottom over which they sail, in order to avoid being blocked up, prefer the narrow channels of Newport to the entrance of the banks of Boston, and who are ignorant of maritime positions, and what determines the strength or weakness of squadrons. Such men, blinded by local and personal interest, which renders every thing excusable in their eyes, have found means to surprise, for an instant, the opinion of some general land officers, whom we shall always profess to esteem, although we are fully persuaded that they have neither the knowledge nor the experience necessary to decide despotically of the possibilities of an element which is not theirs. We think that they will one day regret having accused their most faithful allies, by a kind of juridical protest, of the unhappy consequences of a storm which snatched us from the arms of victory, and of the effects of being twice dismasted." In this letter D'Estaign declares his willingness to lead his land forces from Boston to Rhode island, if their services were deemed necessary.

In Congress, an indiscreet proposition was made, after

after the approbation given to the conduct of Sullivan and his army, to inquire into the causes of the failure of the expedition, but this was set aside by the previous question.

In the first moments of vexation and disappointment, General Sullivan had addressed some letters to the governor of Rhode island, complaining bitterly, and in terms calculated to increase the general discontent, of being abandoned by the fleet. These dispatches were transmitted by the governor to the speaker of their assembly, and were on the point of being publicly submitted to the house, when they were fortunately arrested by General Greene, who had been introduced on the floor, and placed by the side of the chair, and to whom they were shewn by the speaker.

The discontent in New England generally, and in Boston particularly, where the independent companies and militia returned in excessive ill-humour, was so great as to inspire fears that even the means of repairing the French ships would be unattainable; and it was in some degree to guard against the mischief to be apprehended from the prevalence of such a temper, that General Hancock had repaired from camp to Boston, and that La Fayette had followed him on a visit to D'Estaign.

In a very short time, the mischief to be apprehended from this unavailing manifestation of ill temper,

temper, produced by disappointment, induced all reflecting men to exert themselves to control it. In the first moments of its operation, General Washington had foreseen the evils with which it was fraught, and had laboured to prevent them.

In a letter addressed to Colonel Heath, who commanded at Boston, he expressed his apprehensions of the injurious consequences, independent of the mere loss of the advantages to have been derived from succeeding in the expedition, which would result from the unfortunate circumstance of the French fleet having left Rhode island at so critical a moment, unless that event should be very prudently managed. He feared that it might not only weaken the confidence of the people in their new allies, but produce such prejudice and resentment, as might prevent their giving the fleet, in its present distress, such zealous and effectual assistance as was demanded by the exigencies of affairs, and the true interests of America. "It will certainly be sound policy," continues the letter, "to combat these effects, and whatever private opinions may be entertained, to give the best construction of what has happened to the public; and, at the same time, to exert ourselves to put the French fleet as soon as possible, in a condition to defend itself, and be useful to us. The departure of the fleet from Rhode island is not yet publicly announced here, but when it is, I intend

I intend to ascribe it to necessity, produced by the damage received in the late storm. This, it appears to me, is the idea which ought to be generally propagated. As I doubt not the force of these reasons will strike you equally with myself, I would recommend to you to use your utmost influence to palliate and soften matters, and to induce those whose business it is to provide succours of every kind for the fleet, to employ their utmost zeal and activity in doing it. It is our duty to make the best of our misfortunes, and not suffer passion to interfere with our interest and the public good."

To General Sullivan he stated, at the same time, "his apprehension that, should the expedition fail in consequence of being abandoned by the French fleet, loud complaints might be made by the officers employed on it. Prudence," he said, "dictated the propriety of giving this affair the best appearance, and of attributing the withdrawing of the fleet from Rhode island to absolute necessity. The reasons," he added, "for this line of conduct, were too obvious to need explanation. That of most importance was, that their enemies, both external and internal, would seize the first cause of disgust between the allies, and endeavour to convert it into a serious rupture."

He soon afterwards received a resolution of Congress, passed the 28th of August, directing

him

him to take every measure in his power to prevent the publication of the protest entered into by the officers of Sullivan's army. In his letter communicating this resolution, he said, "The disagreement between the army under your command and the fleet, has given me very singular uneasiness. The continent at large is concerned in our cordiality, and it should be kept up by all possible means consistent with our honour and policy. First impressions, you know, are generally longest retained, and will serve to fix, in a great degree, our national character with the French. In our conduct towards them, we should remember, that they are a people old in war, very strict in military etiquette, and apt to take fire when others scarcely seem warmed. Permit me to recommend, in the most particular manner, the cultivation of harmony and good agreement, and your endeavour to destroy that ill humour which may have found its way among the officers. It is of the utmost importance too, that the soldiers and the people should know nothing of this misunderstanding, or, if it have reached them, that means may be used to stop its progress, and prevent its effects." In a letter to General Greene, he said, "I have not now time to take notice of the several arguments which were made use of, for and against the count's quitting the harbour of Newport, and sailing for Boston. Right or wrong,

wrong, it will probably disappoint our sanguine expectations of success, and, which I deem a still worse consequence, I fear it will sow the seeds of dissension and distrust between us and our new allies, unless the most prudent measures be taken to suppress the feuds and jealousies that have already arisen. I depend much on your temper and influence to conciliate that animosity, which, I plainly perceive by a letter from the marquis,* subsists between the American and French officers in our service. This, you may be assured, will extend itself to the count, and the officers and men of his whole fleet, should they return to Rhode island, unless a reconciliation shall have taken place. The marquis speaks kindly of a letter from you to him on this subject. He will, therefore, take any advice from you in a friendly way; and, if he can be pacified, the other French gentlemen will of course be satisfied, since they look up to him as their head. The marquis grounds his complaint on a general order of the 24th of August, and upon the universal clamour that prevailed against the French nation.

* This letter shews the extreme anguish of this nobleman at the injuries he supposed to be offered to his country by the expressions of resentment which fell from the officers of the American army. While it shews his excess of sensibility, wherever France was concerned, it also manifests the most unlimited attachment to the commander in chief.

"I beg

"I beg you will take every measure to keep the protest entered into by the general officers from being made public. Congress, sensible of the ill consequences that will flow from our differences being known to the world, have passed a resolution to that purpose. Upon the whole, my dear sir, you can conceive my meaning better than I can express it,* and I therefore fully depend on your exerting yourself to heal all private animosities between our principal officers and the French, and to prevent all illiberal expressions and reflections that may fall from the army at large."

The general also seized the first opportunity of recommencing his correspondence with the count, which was afforded him by the arrival of reinforcements to the British fleet; and his letters, without noticing the disagreement which had taken place, were calculated to sooth every angry sensation which might have been excited.

A letter was soon afterwards received from the admiral, stating the whole transaction, which was answered by General Washington in a manner so perfectly satisfactory, that the irritation which had threatened such serious mischief, appears entirely to have subsided.

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* Alluding, it is presumed, to the delicacy of suggesting to General Sullivan the mischiefs of any intemperate expressions.

Congress

Congress also, in a resolution which was made public, expressed their perfect approbation of the conduct of the count, and directed the president to assure him, in the letter which should transmit it, that they entertained the highest sense of his zeal and attachment.

The council of Massachussetts, with Generals Hancock, Heath, and other characters of great influence, exerted themselves very much, both to silence the public clamour, and to facilitate the means of accommodating and repairing the fleet. General Sullivan softened the protest which had been the cause of so much resentment, by assuring the count, that the motives of those who signed it, were entirely different from those he had probably attributed to them. It had been believed, that he was individually inclined to remain at Rhode island, but that he felt it impossible, under such instructions as he had received, to resist the united advice of his officers; and this protest, it was declared, had been considered as a document which might be important in defending his continuance in the habour of Newport, should he ultimately resolve to remain there.

Fortunately, the count was himself extremely anxious to effect something with the fleet he commanded, and listened very readily to those assurances which were given him, of a disposition on the part of the United States to cultivate the good opinion

opinion of himself and his nation, and to preserve the utmost harmony with both.

By these prudent and temperate measures, a breach which threatened very serious consequences, was entirely made up.

The storm under which the French fleet had suffered so severely, did considerable damage also to that of Lord Howe. The British, however, had sustained much less injury than the French, and were soon in a condition again to put to sea. Having received information that the Count d'Estaign had made for Boston, Lord Howe sailed for the same port, in the hope of reaching it before him: in this, however, he was disappointed. On entering the bay, he found the French fleet already in Nantasket road, where so judicious a disposition had been made for its defence by the arrangement of the ships, and by batteries on shore, and on Hill and Long islands, that, after reconnoitring their position, he relinquished the idea of attacking them, and returned to New York. Finding on his return that so many ships had arrived, as to render him decidedly superior to the French fleet, he availed himself of this circumstance, and of the permission he had received, some time before, to resign the command to Admiral Gambier, who was to retain it till the arrival of Admiral Byron, then every day expected from Halifax.

Sir Henry Clinton, finding that General Sulli-

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van had retreated to the continent, returned with the fleet of transports towards New York, as far as New London. Against this place he had contemplated an expedition, but finding the winds unfavourable to his entering the river on which the town stands, he left the fleet, and proceeded to New York, leaving the command of the troops on board the transports with Major-general Grey, who was directed to conduct an expedition to the eastward, as far as Bazzard's bay.

General Grey entered Acushnet river, in which were a number of privateers with their prizes, and some merchant ships, nearly the whole of which he destroyed. Great part of the towns of Bedford and Fairhaven was reduced to ashes, and in them a considerable quantity of provisions, military and naval stores, and other merchandise. The troops re-embarked next day, before the militia could be collected in sufficient force to oppose them, and sailed to Martha's vineyard, where they destroyed several vessels, and some salt-works, and levied on the inhabitants a heavy contribution of live stock, which proved a very seasonable supply to the army in New York. While so large a detachment of the British force was committing depredations on the coasts of New England, there were in New York many indications of an intention to carry on some distant expedition, and many were of opinion that the French fleet in the harbour of Boston had become so important an object, as to induce the enemy,

who were now decidedly superior at sea, to give all their efforts that direction. In order to be in readiness to oppose a combined attack, by sea and land, on the fleet of their allies, without exposing the North river, while the main body of the enemy remained in New York, General Gates was directed, with three brigades, to proceed by easy marches as far as Danberry in Connecticut, there to wait for orders. If an enterprise against D'Estaign should be undertaken, he might, by a junction with Sullivan, have a very respectable force for immediate operation, which might soon be followed by a principal part of the army. If, on the contrary, the troops from the eastern country should be recalled, and any attempt should be made upon the Hudson, Gates might in a very short time rejoin the army. In order at the same time to approach somewhat nearer both to the important passes in the highlands, and to the eastern states, so as to be ready to move with the greater celerity towards either of the two objects now supposed of greatest magnitude, the camp at White plains was broken up, and the main body of the army took a position further north, at Frederick-sburg; while General Putnam was detached with two brigades to the neighbourhood of West point, and General Macdougal with two others to Danberry, there to join General Gates.

The return of the squadron under Lord Howe, and of the detachment commanded by General Grey, removed for the present all apprehensions respecting

respecting the French fleet; but, as some other expedition was evidently preparing in New York, the destination of which was entirely unknown, the different divisions of the army retained the positions which had been assigned them.

Soon after the return of General Grey, the British army moved upon each side of the North river in great force. The column on the west side, commanded by Lord Cornwallis, consisting of about five thousand men, took a position with its right on the river, and its left extending to New bridge on the Hackinsack; while the other division, which was commanded by General Knyphausen, consisting of about three thousand men, was advanced about the same distance on the east side of the Hudson, and extending itself from that river to the Brunx. The possession of the river enabled these two columns to re-unite in a very short time, if the American army should advance in force against either of them. General Washington conjectured very righty, that the principal object of this movement was merely to forage. Yet it was possible for them to contemplate seizing the passes in the highlands, by a rapid march, and therefore the detachments, which were ordered on the lines to cover the country, were particularly directed to maintain a position which would enable them to anticipate the execution of such a design, should the attempt be made.

Colonel Baylor, whose regiment of cavalry had been stationed about Paramus, had crossed the

Hackinsack early in the morning of the 27th, and taken quarters at Taupann, or Herring town, a small village near New Taupann, where some militia were posted. Immediate notice of this position was given by some of the disaffected inhabitants to Lord Cornwallis, who formed a plan to surprise and cut off both the cavalry and militia. The party designed to act against Colonel Baylor was to be commanded by Major-general Grey; and a detachment to be commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Campbell, was to be drawn from the division of General Knyphausen, to go against the militia in New Taupann.

That part of the plan which was to be executed by Campbell, was defeated by some delay in passing the river, during which a deserter gave notice of his approach, and the militia saved themselves by flight. But the corps commanded by General Grey, guided by some of the country people, who perfectly understood the ground, and had made themselves masters of the position of the guards, eluded the patroles, got into the rear of the serjeant's guard, posted by Colonel Baylor at a bridge over the Hackinsack, where the roads leading to Herring town on both sides the river meet, and surrounded, and cut off this party without alarming Baylor; after which, they completely surprised his whole regiment. The British troops rushed upon them into a barn where they slept; and refusing to give quarter, bayoneted for a time all they fell in with. Of one hundred and

four

four privates, sixty-seven were killed, wounded, or taken. The number of prisoners, amounting to about forty, is stated to have been increased by the humanity of one of General Grey's captains, who notwithstanding the severity of the orders he had received, gave quarter to the whole of the fourth troop. Colonel Baylor, and Major Clough, who were both wounded with the bayonet, the first very dangerously, the last mortally, were among the prisoners.

The cruelty used on this occasion, which was believed to have been unnecessary, excited no slight degree of mingled horror and indignation. Depositions to establish the facts were, in compliance with a request from Congress, taken under the direction of Governor Livingston of New Jersey, by the reverend Doctor Griffith of Virginia, and published to the world.

Three days after this, Colonel Richard Butler, with a detachment of infantry, assisted by Major Lee with a part of his cavalry, fell in with a party of fifteen chasseurs, and about one hundred yagers, under Captain Donop, on whom they instantly made so rapid a charge, that without losing a single man they killed ten on the spot, and took the officer commanding the chasseurs, and eighteen of the yagers, prisoners. The extreme roughness of the country which impeded the action of the horse, and prevented part of the infantry from coming up, alone enabled a man of the enemy to escape. Some interest was taken at the time in this

this small affair, because it seemed in a measure to revenge and compensate for the loss of Baylor.

Having completed their forage, the British army returned to New York.

This movement had been, in part, designed to favour an expedition against Little Egg harbour. The facility with which the command of the water enabled the enemy to transport themselves in any direction, gave them an immense advantage in that small kind of war which distresses individuals, without tending to conquer a country. This expedition was completely successful, and the works and storehouses, as well as the vessels and merchandizes found there, were entirely destroyed. It has been already stated, that Count Pulaski had been appointed General of the American cavalry. The dissatisfaction given by this appointment to the officers, had induced him to resign his commission; but, thirsting for military fame, and zealous in the American cause, he solicited and obtained permission to raise a legionary corps, which he officered principally with foreigners, and commanded in person. In this corps, which consisted of three incomplete companies of foot, and three of horse, with a few artillerymen, and a field-piece, one Juliet, a deserter from the enemy, had been admitted as an officer. The count had been ordered to march from Trenton towards Little Egg harbour, and was lying eight or ten miles from the coast, when this Juliet again deserted, and rejoined his countrymen, carrying with

with him the intelligence of Pulaski's strength and situation. A plan was immediately formed to surprise him, which was completely executed so far as respected his infantry, who were put to the bayonet. The British account of this expedition represents his whole corps to have been entirely destroyed. In the report made of the affair to Congress by Pulaski, he states his loss at about forty, and asserts, that on coming up with his cavalry to the relief of his infantry, he drove the enemy from the ground. It is probable that the one account diminishes, as much as the other magnifies, the importance of this enterprise.

In these expeditions a determination to destroy as extensively as possible seems to have prevailed. Not only public stores, but the private buildings and the property of individuals on the coast, within their reach, were reduced to ashes. For this distressing devastation, alike experienced about Bedford and Little Egg harbour, some apology was found in the peculiar objects against which those enterprises were particularly directed; both posts having been distinguished as the rendezvous of privateers, from whence they sallied out to the great annoyance of British commerce.

As soon as Admiral Byron, who reached New York, and took command of the fleet about the middle of September, had made the repairs to his shattered squadron, which were necessary to enable him again to put to sea, he sailed for the port of Boston, for the purpose of blocking up the

Count

Count d'Estaign, and of availing himself of any circumstances which might favour an attack on the French fleet. He had been but a short time in the bay, when fortune again disconcerted all his plans. A furious storm drove him out to sea, and damaged him so essentially, that he was under the necessity of putting into the port of Rhode island to refit. This favourable moment was seized by the Count d'Estaign, whose fleet was now completely repaired, and he set sail on the 3d of November for the West Indies, where the operations of the war rendered his aid of essential importance.

Thus terminated, without any material advantage, an expedition, concerning the success of which the most sanguine hopes had, not without reason, been generally entertained. A variety of accidents had defeated plans judiciously formed, having every probability in their favour. The original object of the armament, to the attainment of which it was entirely competent, was the British fleet in the Delaware, and the army in Philadelphia. It has been already shown, that a passage of most extraordinary length, on which it was impossible to have calculated, detained it at sea, till the fleet and army had abandoned a position of so much danger; and thereby saved the British power from a blow the most serious it had then experienced.

By a very few days too the opportunity of finding Lord Howe without the bar, and of obstruct-

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ing the passage of Sir Henry Clinton from the continent to the hook, now become an island, was lost.

Nor was the time of D'Estaign's departure from the hook less critical. Within eight days after his leaving that station, four ships of war, one a seventy-four, one a sixty-four, and two of fifty guns, came in singly; and in all probability, had they reached their destination sooner, they would have fallen into his hands. This reinforcement was the more essential, as, without it, Lord Howe could not have ventured to molest the operations against Rhode island.

The storm which parted the fleets in the moment when an engagement was commencing, with the advantage of the wind and a great superiority of force on the side of the French, which dismasted and rendered unfit for immediate service the admiral's ship, and some others of their finest vessels, was another untoward occurrence, which as effectually defeated the enterprise against Rhode island, and as effectually destroyed the brilliant prospects founded on that enterprise, as could have been done by a complete naval victory on the part of Lord Howe.

So much are the best laid plans, and the most important human transactions, dependent on fortune, and the judicious use of occurrences, in themselves apparently indifferent!

The Marquis de la Fayette, ambitious of fame on another theatre, was now desirous of returning

to France. He supposed it possible that war might break out on the continent of Europe, and he was ambitious of tendering his services to his king and to his own country.

General Washington, from motives of real friendship, and for political reasons also, was desirous of preserving his connection with the army, and of strengthening his attachment to America. He therefore expressed to Congress his wishes, that Fayette, instead of resigning his commission, might have unlimited leave of absence, to return when it should be convenient to himself; and might carry with him every mark of the confidence of the government.

To this policy Congress was well disposed, and to the leave of absence which had been required, they added the most flattering resolutions. The partiality of America for La Fayette was well placed. Never did a foreigner, whose primary attachments were to his own country, feel more anxious solicitude for the welfare of another, than was unceasingly manifested by this young nobleman for the United States.

As there was very little prospect of an active winter campaign in the northern or middle states, and the climate admitted of military operations, during that season, in a different part of the world, a detachment from the British army, consisting of five thousand men, under Major-general Grant, sailed the same day that D'Estaign departed from Boston, convoyed by six ships of war commanded by

by Commodore Hotham, destined also for the West India islands; and towards the end of the same month, another embarkation took place for the southern parts of the continent. This second detachment was commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Campbell, who was escorted by Commodore Hyde Parker, and was destined to act offensively against the southern states.

As there yet remained a force sufficient to secure New York, the American army retired into winter quarters. The main body was cantoned in Connecticut, on both sides the North river, about West point, and at Middle brook, while light troops were stationed nearer the lines, and the cavalry were drawn into the interior to recruit the horses for the next campaign. In this distribution, the protection of the country, the security of important posts, a cheap and convenient supply of provisions, were as much as possible consulted. The great body of the army lay on the west side of the Hudson, because the supplies of bread were to be drawn west of that river, while those of meat abounded most on the eastern side of it. The superior difficulty and expence attending the conveyance of flour over the driving of live stock, rendered it advisable, with a view both to economy and certainty of supply, to approach with the greatest numbers that tract of country which could alone furnish the article most expensive in its transportation.

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The troops again wintered in huts; but they were now accustomed to this mode of passing that inclement season of the year. Though far from being well clothed, yet their condition in that respect was so much ameliorated by supplies from France, that they disregarded the inconveniencies they were under the necessity of encountering.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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